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A POPULAR HISTORY OF THE FREE CHURCHES

First Edition, March, 1903.
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CROMWELL ON HIS FARM.

(*From the Painting by Ford Madox Brown.*)

A POPULAR HISTORY

OF THE

FREE CHURCHES

BY

C. SILVESTER HORNE M.A.

With Thirty-Nine Full-Page Illustrations

FOURTH EDITION

London

JAMES CLARKE & CO. 13 & 14 FLEET STREET

1903

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C. SILVESTER HORNE, M.A.

With Thirty-nine Full-Page Illustrations

REVISED EDITION

London

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TO

THE RIGHT HON.

LORD JUSTICE COZENS-HARDY

WITH

ALL LOVE AND ESTEEM.

3396.

PREFACE

In sending this book forth, I am glad to think that it may be of some service in the great struggles that await Free Churchmen. The story I have had to tell is full of inspiration and encouragement. It is the story of an unconquerable spirit dedicated to the service of an indestructible ideal. While the men and women of the Free Churches are bracing themselves to renew the fight for unsectarian education and religious equality it may be well that they refresh their memories of those illustrious forbears who helped to make England great.

I have to acknowledge much kind co-operation in the preparation of the illustrations and revision of some of the chapters. I am especially indebted to Mrs. Rylands, of Manchester, for permission to reproduce a number of old engravings.

Readers of these pages will see that while Puritanism has assumed various forms, it has always stood for a spiritual interpretation of Christianity and the Christian Church. This spiritual interpretation, as Milton said, "it hath befallen us to assert, with God's assistance, . . . against regal tyranny over the State, and State tyranny over the Church." Regal tyranny

over the State exists no longer, thanks to the fidelity and fortitude of our forefathers; but it has its counterpart in the authority of an hereditary House of Peers, in which no single Free Churchman has a place, and which is an effective instrument against popular privilege and progress. State tyranny over the Church there must always be, so long as the supreme authority over the Church is a secular assembly composed of men of every sort of religious opinion or of none. Possibly the Englishman of to-day, with the recent high-handed action of the Bishops in mind, may think he has more reason to fear Church tyranny over the State. But either danger will remain until the British people has the courage to establish as a fundamental principle and privilege of the Constitution—Religious Equality for all, and Ecclesiastical Ascendency for none.

C. S. H.

KENSINGTON,
February, 1903.

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Free Church History.

CHAPTER I.

Pioneers.

Even as John Wyclif was a Protestant before Protestantism, so he may be said to have been a Free Churchman before the Free Church movement took definite form and shape. He not only claimed a right to independent thought and belief, but he acted upon the claim. He was as conspicuous for his courage as for his learning: intellectual courage in facing theological and ecclesiastical problems as they presented themselves to him, and moral courage in strenuous and intrepid advocacy of his convictions despite danger and difficulty. The historian who is interested in investigating the origins of religious freedom in England is arrested by Wyclif's three-fold witness. Firstly, that the Bible is the ultimate court of appeal in all matters of conduct, doctrine, and government. He gave expression to this conviction by translating the Bible into the vulgar tongue, so that even the "wayfaring man" might come at its contents. Secondly, that there is such a thing as private judgment in matters theological, and that it is open to the Christian thinker and teacher to call in question even the most cherished dogma of the authoritative Church,

and make appeal to the simplicity of the teaching of Christ. This was seen in his protest against the dogma of Transubstantiation, a protest which cost him dear, but which was of immense significance in English history. Thirdly, that the Church in grasping the temporal power is sacrificing her true authority and jeopardising her influence. She is, in fact, losing her soul to a false ideal. This is strikingly illustrated in one of the last letters written by Wyclif—a letter excusing himself for not attending to answer for his heresies at the papal court. "I assume," he wrote, "that as chief vicar of Christ upon earth the Bishop of Rome is of all mortal men most bound to the law of Christ's Gospel, for among the disciples of Christ a majority is not reckoned by simply counting heads in the fashion of this world, but according to the imitation of Christ on either side. Now Christ during His life upon earth was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premisses, as a simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power, and advise his clergy to do the same." This was in the year 1383. It contains the fundamental Free Church contention that Christ did deliberately "cast from Him all worldly authority," in harmony with which His Church on earth "should surrender all temporal authority." Five hundred years have passed since Wyclif died, and his ideal has not yet been realised. But the gradual transfer of "temporal authority" from the Church to the State has immensely strengthened both; and the day can hardly be far distant when the Church will finally repudiate the false ideal that for centuries has obscured its vision and crippled its influence, and will enter through the strait gate of Disestablishment into larger and purer life.

So far as England was concerned Wyclif's seed was

autumn-sown. His "lollard" followers were suppressed with apparent absoluteness, and it must have seemed to all as if the great sower had failed. No centuries of English history are drearier and more infertile than the centuries that succeeded Wyclif. The soil to which his seed had been committed was frost-bound. The winter was hard and long; but it passed, and when the revival of thought and faith came, Wyclif's long-buried teachings sprang to life and power. Abroad, his writings bore fruit early, and that of the noblest sort. John Huss nourished his soul on Wyclif's books, extracting from them certain great convictions for which he was eventually burned at the stake by order of the Council of Constance in 1415. Jerome of Prague was another disciple. It was at Oxford that Jerome imbibed the "new learning" which made him firstly a reformer and secondly a martyr. He, too, was condemned to the stake by the Council of Constance as a Wyclifite in 1416. Such men are not silenced. Rather, their message becomes trumpet-tongued. The testimony of Huss and Jerome resounded through Europe. Something more than the dying echoes of it are heard in the great Florentine monk, Savonarola, who, before the century was out, made his confession "through smoke and flame," one of freedom's martyr sons. When Martin Luther was on his way to the Diet at Worms he was met at Naumburg by "a certain priest," who took him to his house, introduced him to an inner room, and then silently and wistfully laid in his hands the portrait of a monk of Florence who for zeal in the cause of reformation had suffered a cruel death by fire. The portrait was, of course, that of Girolamo Savonarola, and the effect of it on Luther was the opposite of that intended. He "conceived rather courage than fear from the lesson it presented." Years afterwards Luther associated

Savonarola with Huss and Jerome as the proto-martyrs of the Reformation. This is enough to show how on the Continent the torch which Wyclif had lighted was handed on from reformer to reformer until it blazed out in the hand of Luther to such purpose that Europe saw it and awoke.

In justice we ought also to remember that Wyclif himself had predecessors in the same spirit. God hath never left Himself without a witness; and there were points of light even in the darkest ages. When Wyclif first came under the ban of the Pope, Gregory XI. issued a Bull against him in which it was set forth that he held "the doctrine taught by Marsilius of Padua of accursed memory." Who was this Marsilius? He was a man who, about the time of Wyclif's birth, published an exceedingly brave and scholarly book in which he maintained—(1) That the sovereignty of the State rests with the people; (2) that the name Church has for true meaning the entire body of Christian men. All are alike Churchmen whether they be laymen or clerks. It is intolerable that the prerogatives of the Church should be usurped by the sacerdotal order. Excommunication is not for a Pope, or a priest, or a body of priests to pronounce; it belongs to "the community of the faithful." The power of the clergy is spiritual, and can only be given effect to by spiritual means. Temporal pains and penalties do not belong to the law of the Gospel. The Pope is only a presbyter or bishop as any other. The supreme power in the Church is the Church itself; and it has this power over the Pope. Thus Marsilius of Padua "of accursed memory" sought to recover for the Church itself those privileges and responsibilities usurped by one order in the Church; and to make the great body of Christian people the ultimate source of power and authority.

This was strong meat. Marsilius was advocating doctrines which have only slowly come to their own in the Church of Christ after centuries of controversy and conflict. There is no doubt that his teaching had a powerful influence over the mind of John Wyclif.

Another of Wyclif's immediate predecessors was the "Invincible Doctor," an unconquerable son of freedom, William of Occam. He, too, earned the high honour of papal condemnation and excommunication, and also that of the Franciscan order to which he was at first attached. His "heresy" was the denial of papal authority in secular affairs. William of Occam was a free, fearless voice in what has been justly called "an age of intellectual torpor." Men who could not or would not think for themselves, could and would punish those who did. However much the great Doctor might differ in theological opinion from the majority of modern Dissenters, we recognise that he was a sturdy champion of freedom of thought, and that he suffered manfully the pains and penalties which the Nonconformist has always had to bear from the earliest times. His example and witness, moreover, were not without effect; his spirit of freedom and fortitude lived again in Wyclif.

Between Wyclif and what we commonly speak of as the Reformation there lies the period of the Revival of Learning. The two names that have most significance for Free Churchmen are John Colet and Thomas More. Colet was all for New Testament simplicity. He would lead Christendom back to the true primitive model, before Christianity was overlaid with patristic errors or the papal heresy was born. Traditional dogmas did not obscure the Evangelical realities for John Colet. As Green says, "his faith stood simply on a vivid realisation of the Person of Christ." The emphasis which his work, and that of Erasmus, laid on the New Testament

was ominous of changes that were bound to come. Touched by that potent wand the whole hierarchical system, with its "cloud-capt towers and gorgeous palaces," would "dissolve," and,

> Like an insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind.

Moreover, the elaborate dogmatic system due, as Colet affirmed, to "the corruptions of the schoolmen" would suffer similar disintegration, and Christendom recover a simpler and more primitive faith. Sir Thomas More, whose strange destiny it was to die for Catholicism, a martyr witnessing for the prerogative of his Church against an Erastian Protestantism, is most significant for our history on account of his "Utopia"—that immortal sketch of an ideal State. In that book More just missed the honour of being the first to state the full principle of toleration. In More's "Utopia" nobody is to suffer physical punishment on account of his religious opinions. Every man is free to convince another, if he can, of the truth of his belief by persuasion, but not by coercion. But because infidelity implies a degradation of the human intellect, the disbeliever is to be subject to a civil disability. He cannot hold any public office. Thus Sir Thomas More was in theory almost persuaded to be a Tolerationist outright. That fair distinction was reserved for men of far less genius and reputation, whose work and witness we are about to chronicle.

The Reformation, whatever else it did or did not do, subjected the Church to the State, and exalted a Henry the Eighth to be the egregious head of the Church of Christ in England. It is fair to say that the pretensions of the Church, her claims to temporal power, and the growing arrogance of her prelates, had made this reaction

inevitable. The result, however, was disastrous to religion. To make the leaders in the Church dependent upon King, and subsequently upon Parliament, for support and preferment, was to encourage servility and undermine that independence of spirit which is essential if the Church is to be of any real power and influence in the land. The great gift of the Reformation was undoubtedly the authorisation of the Bible in the speech of the people. Men and women who for generations had identified Christianity with the jargon of monks and schoolmen, fed themselves from the plain teaching of the Bible with pathetic avidity; and when, in Mary's day, another attempt was made by Rome to root out the Bible from English churches and English homes, the heroism of the Protestant martyrs was sufficient evidence how deep a debt of gratitude they owed to the Book which had revealed to them the simple Christianity of Christ and His apostles. With Elizabeth's accession came the recovery of the privilege to hear and read the Bible, but also the subjection of the Church and its ministers to the royal will. There was no solution but one of this problem of the relations of Church and State; and that was a solution that nobody seriously entertained. It was to set the Church free from State patronage and control, and let it pursue its true work of inspiring faith and purifying morals among the people. Elizabeth set herself to "tune" her bishops; she could "frock" them and "unfrock" them at her royal pleasure. Among all her subjects none were more obsequious than those who should have been most open and bold. If the Church of Christ was ever again to come to its own, and speak with free unconstrained voice and equal authority to all persons in the realm, from the peasant in his cottage to the monarch on the throne, it must first be emancipated. It must purchase

its freedom at a great price. It must make itself of no reputation, and go forth without the gate bearing the reproach of Him whose Kingdom was not of this world. In other words it was necessary that men should arise who would separate from the Church of England for the sake of the Church of Christ, and the freedom wherewith Christ had made them free. How this conviction grew; how it was cast as a seed by the wayside, and yet struck its roots into good soil, and lived and throve and spread; how mighty a harvest has already been reaped, and how white are the fields unto the nobler harvest yet to be, it is the purpose of this book to tell. The story before us is the history of an ideal actualising itself; an ideal that once lived only in the thought of a few obscure and simple men and women, but which is to-day the accepted ideal of by far the greater part of the English-speaking world. This is the romance of the Free Churches.

CHAPTER II.

Robert Browne.

Anyone setting out to investigate Free Church "origins" is brought up short against the problem of Robert Browne. We have probably now in our hands all the material we shall ever have from which to form a judgment on this singular man; and yet it is difficult to get two historians to agree. The tendency, however, of the present day is undoubtedly towards a more generous estimate of his character and influence. As to the latter, indeed, there can hardly be two opinions. Dr. Charles Borgeaud, who calls him "the founder of Congregationalism," declares that "he has gained a definite place among the first defenders of religious liberty." Even those who were most concerned to disavow his name were largely indebted to his opinions. Such title to fame as is contained in the claim to have given the first clear exposition of the freedom of the Church fairly belongs to Robert Browne. The late Dr. Dexter, of America, by bringing to light some long-buried pamphlets of Browne's in the Lambeth Library, did more than anyone else for the honour of his memory. We are beginning to recognise that the worst things that were written and said about him proceeded from those who were most interested in abusing his reputation. Neither are we, who have seen how time has dealt with the character of Cromwell, surprised that the character of Browne should begin to

appear far less black than it was originally painted. However that may be, justice demands that we should give him credit for his ideas; and these are not in doubt, since we now possess the originals of several of his pamphlets, which are sufficient to guarantee to him the distinction awarded by Dr. Borgeaud. He was among the first defenders of religious liberty; and he was so because he asserted the liberty of Christian people to organise themselves for the propagation of the Christian faith and the practice of its discipline.

Robert Browne is so great a figure in the history of the Free Church movement that a brief sketch of his chequered and clouded career is indispensable. He was born at the little village of Tolethorpe in Rutlandshire, and came, as Fuller says, "of an ancient and worshipfull family." His forbears had lived in the neighbourhood for two hundred years, and had been rich, powerful and generous. One had founded a hospital; one had built a church; one had "received by special charter from Henry VIII. the somewhat extraordinary distinction of being allowed to remain covered in the presence of the king, and of all lords spiritual and temporal in the reign." This latter was Robert Browne's grandfather, and the freedom he obtained by special charter one feels his grandson would have been more than likely to exercise without. In 1570, Robert Browne matriculated at Corpus Christi, Cambridge. At that time Thomas Cartwright was preaching discourses which had the effect of dividing Cambridge into two ecclesiastical camps. The year after Browne matriculated Cartwright was deprived of his fellowship and expelled from the University, principally by the influence of Whitgift. Browne's sympathies would naturally be with the preacher who was thus roughly handled for seeking to effect a reform within

TOLETHORPE HALL, BIRTHPLACE OF ROBERT BROWNE.

the Church along Presbyterian lines. But meanwhile, he himself had travelled beyond Cartwright. He can barely have reached manhood when he got into trouble for preaching extreme views, as the private chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk. The Duke honourably shielded him from the wrath of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; and we discover Browne next in the capacity of usher, "teaching schollers for about the space of three years." But he was not commissioned to teach school: the ideal that he had discovered in the New Testament had already gripped him, and he carried his doctrine into the open air and expounded it in Islington gravel-pits and elsewhere, not without secret and open opposition. In 1579, through the connivance and co-operation of the Rev. Richard Greenham, of Dry Drayton, near Cambridge, he was provided with a pulpit and permitted to preach openly, though "without leave and special word from the bishop." His fame growing, we hear of him preaching in Benet Church, "under the very shadow of the University itself," greatly to the exercise of the more punctilious and conservative of the authorities. "The vehemence of his utterance," says the epigrammatic Fuller, "made the vulgar to admire, the wise to suspect him." The latter had not stoned one prophet out of Cambridge to be invaded by a second and more extreme one. Nevertheless Browne did actually accept a Cambridge pulpit and perform the duties of preacher and pastor for half a year, at the end of which time, we are told, "he sent back the monie thei would have given him, and also gave them warning of his departure." Clearly he was no hireling. His notions were now resolutely anti-episcopal, and when his brother obtained for him the bishop's licence to preach, Robert refused to pay for it, and subsequently destroyed it. He preached "to satisfy his duetie and conscience," he said.

Thomas Fuller continues his biography of Browne in words that are too pithy to be omitted. "Some years after Browne went over into Zealand to purchase himself more reputation from forraign parts. For a smack of travail gives an high taste to strange opinions, making them better relished to the licourish lovers of novelty. Home he returns with a full crie against the Church of England, as having so much of Rome she had nothing of Christ in her discipline."

The reasons, however, for this excursion into "Zealand" are worthy of note. Many things happened first. Browne discovered a kindred spirit in Richard Harrison, a graduate of his own college of Corpus Christi, in Cambridge. The two men established themselves at Norwich, and opened an energetic campaign on behalf of the New Testament principle they had re-discovered. One consequence to Browne was his first taste of imprisonment "for delivering unto the people corrupt and contentious doctrine." By the intervention of his kinsman, Lord Treasurer Burghley, he was released and sent home to his father, who, however, soon began to despair of reducing his recalcitrant son to a proper state of mind. Thomas Fuller piously remarks, "*Men* may *wish*, *God* only can *work* children to be good." Robert Browne was not a *good* child according to his worthy father's ideas, who had expressly given him to understand that he "would own him for his son no longer than his son owned the Church of England for his mother." It was clear that Browne's powerful relatives would not trouble to protect him further. Persecutions were in store for other members of the little Norwich Church if they remained where they were. There was nothing for it but to seek freedom elsewhere. "The Lord did call them out of England," was the recorded judgment of all the members. To-day we pass lightly over such

sacrifices as they were called upon to make; but the least sensitive among us may spare a tribute of admiration for those who, for the sake of what must have appeared to all men of the world an insignificant opinion, were prepared to sell their goods, forsake their occupations, take farewell of their friends, quit their native land, and seek hospitality under a foreign flag and among an alien people. "Apparently," writes Dr. Dexter, "in 1581 the little church and its pastor emigrated to Middelberg, where they received permission of the magistrates to abide in freedom of faith and worship."

In freedom they did indeed abide; but alas, by no means in unity. To make so great a sacrifice for liberty of opinion commonly argues strong individuality and even obstinacy of mind. Their inward dissensions fortunately do not concern the chronicler of the Free Church movement in England. The upshot was that in 1583 Browne took ship for Scotland with "four or five Englishmen with their wives and families." Whatever we may think of Browne, he evidently had that gift of personal leadership which drew others to throw in their lot with him, and face with him even a forlorn hope. From Norwich to Middelberg, from Middelberg to Scotland, a remnant of disciples, taking their families with them, follow this fiery apostle of a new Church idea.

In Middelberg Thomas Cartwright had an English Church, but apparently he had come to regard the situation in England as impossible; for he made no further attempts to propagate his views. Fuller seems disposed to applaud him for this dignified silence, and suggests in his defence that "whilst *women* strive for the *last word*, *men* please themselves with the *last reason*." With Browne, however, it was otherwise. He was not content that Middelberg should hear his views; and during

his two years' sojourn there he found time, amid the distractions of controversy with his own people, to write and carry through the press three pamphlets which have fortunately escaped the fate which the law designed for them. Their titles are as follows:—(1) "A Booke which sheweth the Life and Manners of all true Christians, and howe unlike they are unto Turkes and Papistes and Heathen folke. Also the Pointes and Partes of all Divinitie, &c." (1582); (2) "A Treatise upon the 23 Matthewe, &c." (1582); (3) "A Treatise of Reformation without Tarying for Anie, &c." (1582). We shall have more to say about their contents later; but as to their effect upon some who read them we have only to remember that it was for circulating these messages from Browne to the English people that John Copping and Elias Thacker were hanged at Bury St. Edmunds; books "to the number of fortie" by Browne and Harrison being burned at the same time as a witness to the justice of their sentence.

Returning to Browne's wanderings, it appears that Scotland was scarcely less hostile to this restless missionary than England had been. From his apartments in the Canongate he would sally forth to proclaim his convictions on purity of fellowship. Summoned before the Presbytery of Edinburgh, he was nothing abashed, but roundly declared that their "whole discipline was amiss," and announced his intention of making appeal to the magistrate. This was a game at which two could play, and the Session retaliated by procuring his incarceration in the common gaol, while a committee of two sat upon his books with a view to exposing their pestilent heresies. The records fail us at this stage, and all we know further is that Browne obtained his liberty, and used it to travel over Scotland, of which he formed a very unfavourable impression,

which he expressed in terms that were not calculated to endear him to the Kirk. On his return to England he is known to have published a book which has unfortunately been lost, but Bishop Bancroft, preaching at St. Paul's Cross, quoted from it one significant passage. It was to the effect that if Parliament should establish the Presbyterian system instead of the Episcopal, "that then in steede of one Pope we shoulde have a 1,000, and of some lord Bishops in name a 1,000, Lordlie tyrants in deed which nowe do disdain the names." To anyone who has read Browne's writings carefully, it will occur that John Milton must almost certainly have known them, so close in many instances is the kinship of ideas. There are passages in Milton which recall this affirmation of Browne's as to the consequence of establishing Presbytery.

Nothing was to be looked for in England but further imprisonments and persecutions. Perhaps Browne counted on the protection of such powerful kinsmen as Lord Burghley or Earl Cecil of Exeter; but Burghley had done all he was disposed to do, and delivered the heretic over to his Grace of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. "I have cause to pity the poor man," he adds. The ecclesiastical authorities had none. We do not know the full details of his imprisonments, but we have reason to believe that his health, and indeed his mental balance, gave way. When he was well and at large he delivered his soul with the old conviction. But he was a broken man; and when in 1586 the Bishop of Peterborough "excommunicated him for contempt," he gave way, was formally reconciled to the Church and installed as master of the grammar school at St. Olave's, Southwark. Four or five years later he was preferred to the living of Achurch-cum-Thorpe, where he actually resided and worked for upwards of

forty years. If Fuller can be trusted his end was miserable. At eighty years of age he was committed to prison for assaulting a constable who was pressing him for payment of rates. "A cart with a feather bed was provided to carry him, he himself being too infirme (above eighty) to goe, too unweldie to ride, and no friend so favourable as to purchase for him a more comly conveyance. To Northampton jayle he is sent, where soon after he sickened, died, and was buried in a neighbouring Church-yard." Our orthodox historian is good enough to add, "and it is no hurt to wish that his bad opinions had been interred with him."

Some people are difficult to please. Those who used the most violent measures to prevail on Browne to conform were fiercest in assailing him for turning his coat. Those who had abused him for preaching outside the Establishment now reviled him for preaching inside. They had confined him *thirty-two times* in prisons, some of which were so dark, he says, that he could not see his hand before his face. They had used against him the extreme spiritual terror of excommunication. At last they had their way. Browne was half bullied and half bribed into submission. The reward of his Nonconformity had been persecution; the reward of his conformity was contempt.

In the absence of conclusive evidence we can hardly expect to agree upon a solution of the problem of Robert Browne. Some who value his teaching have been disposed to dismiss him with some such remark as Theodore Parker applied to a Boston orator, "he is a great scoundrel, but he loves liberty." But a more just and charitable judgment is the one that is so persuasively presented in the pages of Dr. Dexter's history. Browne was undoubtedly a genius, highly-strung, excitable, quick-tempered, and of a certain fiery quality of spirit. He was an enthusiast, and a man of one idea. Although

he lingered on to fourscore years, in his early manhood his constitution was frail; and the sufferings he endured might well have told upon the health of a mind that was more solidly built than his. After his outward reconciliation to the Church, and while he was master at St. Olave's, he wrote a tract which was clearly the work of a disorganised brain. It contained "Latine tables and definitions" framed out of the Word of God, "which he esteems the fittest original of all necessarie and general rules of the arts and all learning." He proposes to read public lectures on the subject, "as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Pythagoras did." There is evidence that for nearly nine years he was secluded while nominally rector of a church. Several of his contemporaries bear testimony that he was often strangely affected in his manner. Bredwell talks of "the inward ruines and downfall of judgement." "Browne," he says, "is sound, his brain is sicke." But for all the accumulation of evidence on this point Dr. Dexter's discussion of the matter must be read. After reading it the general feeling, we doubt not, will be that it is not charity alone, but truth that draws the conclusion that Robert Browne's mental equilibrium was destroyed by his many sufferings, and by the strain and excitement of his restless life. It was a wrecked intellect that he gave back to the keeping of the Church that had once excommunicated him. Shattered physically and mentally, he may be said to have denied his past when he re-entered the Establishment; but in his full and robust manhood he was of quite another mind. Moreover, it is of curious interest to us to-day to discover that those who were all for his persecution while he was advocating heresy confess that though he returned to the Church he was never known to recant his opinions. Silenced he was, but not convinced. "I will never believe," says

Fuller, "that he ever formally recanted his opinions, either by word or writing, as to the main of what he maintained." If this be true, it is more than likely that Robert Browne suffered in his saner moments not more from the sorrow of his former friends, who keenly resented his recreancy, and from the general suspicion and dislike of his brother Churchmen, than from his own self-accusation and self-contempt. What a theme he would have furnished for one of Browning's "Dramatis Personæ," the half-deranged old man, borne on a feather bed in a cart to die in his last prison, he who in the freshness of youth, when young men see visions, had fastened on a great belief as to the simplicity and freedom of Church fellowship; who had witnessed for it in thirty-two prisons, had exiled himself for it, broken with home and prospects for it, been disowned by his nearest kin, wandered through Flanders and Scotland and England for it, until his mind gave way beneath the strain of thought and feeling, and he consented to his own shame. One fancies him as he is jolted along on his last journey to Northampton Gaol, reviewing the weary years of silence and apostasy, with a certain grim comfort, perhaps, in the thought that never even in his broken old age had he disavowed with his tongue the principles which were revealed to his youth. So he goes his way to death in prison and burial in an unknown grave; and it seemed for many a long year as if the evil that he did lived after him while the good was interred with his bones. But after three hundred years it is the good that lives. The principles that he expounded so forcibly and defended so earnestly have long won general assent from Christian scholars and thinkers in many lands, and to-day have their application in thousands of Christian communities.

The most significant of Robert Browne's writings is

undoubtedly the "Treatise of Reformation Without Tarying for Anie." It is an appeal to the Christian people, and especially to Christian ministers, not to wait for the civil power or the Ecclesiastical rulers to authorise a reformation, but to begin it themselves where they are, with no other authorisation than that of Christ Himself. It had been an early saying of his that "the kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, were they never so few." He believed intensely that Christ's Church must be composed of men who in faith and spirit were Christ's disciples; whereas the custom was to count every reprobate parishioner as a Churchman, if he submitted to the outward jurisdiction of the Church. "The Lorde's people," he said, in memorable words, "is of the willing sorte." The clergy who dared not proceed to take any responsible step without the consent of the civil government were a perpetual target for Browne's sharpest arrows. "They saye the time has not yet come to build the Lorde's house; they must tarie for the magistrates and for Parliament to do it." "Can the Lorde's spiritual government," he cries, "be in no way executed but by the civil sworde?" With unanswerable cogency he set forth the dilemma of a magistrate who being of the flock of a certain pastor is subject to his oversight and discipline; but who, nevertheless, can unjustly and wrongfully discharge the pastor. Nobody ever stated the independence of Church and State more clearly than Browne in this remarkable pamphlet. "They put the Magistrates first," he writes, "which in a commonwealth indeede are first, and above the preachers; yet have they no ecclesiasticall authoritie at all, but only as any other Christians, if so be that they are Christians." This is high churchmanship, but it is free as well as high, the teaching of one who was fully prepared to pay the price of freedom. His doctrine of

the ministry, too, is far nobler than theirs who entrust the appointment of ministers and bishops to patrons and state-officials. "The dispensation (to preach) is committed unto me, and this dispensation did not the Magistrate give me, but God, *by consent and ratifying of the Church;* and therefore, as the Magistrate gave it not, so can he not take it away." Finally, there is this clear judgment, which Milton might well have written: "Because the Church is in a commonwealth it is of their charge; that is concerning the outward provision and outward justice they are to looke to it; but to compell religion, to plant churches by power, to force a submission to ecclesiasticall government by lawes and penalties belongeth not to them, neither yet to the Church. The outward power and civill forcings let us leave to the Magistrates; to rule the Commonwealth in all outward justice belongeth unto them; but let the Church rule in spirituall wise and not in worldlie maner; by a lively law preached and not by a civill law written; by holiness in inwarde and outwarde obedience, and not in straightness of the outwarde onelie. But these handsome Prelates would have the Mase and the Scepter in their handes, and then haveing safetie and assurance by a lawe on their sides, they would make a goodlie reformation."

We know how little disposed the Church of England was to listen to the oracles of Robert Browne, but will anyone say that she might not have been spared much bitter humiliation and many dark passages in her history could she have laid to heart the teaching of this young prophet for whom she had no answer but prison walls?

CHAPTER III.

The Policy of Whitgift.

It should be remembered that there had been one momentous event which inclined many English people to listen more earnestly to men like Robert Browne than they might otherwise have done. In the year 1572, shortly after Browne's first trouble with the authorities from which he was extricated by the kind offices of the Duke of Norfolk, all Protestant Europe was appalled by the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Goaded to desperation by the mingled taunts and entreaties of Catherine de Medici, the Queen Mother, the weak and miserable Charles IX. gave the longed-for signal, and the Catholic mob was let loose upon the Huguenots of France. Inhuman as was Catherine de Medici's joy over the unspeakable horrors of those pitiless days, she had a rival in her satisfaction. The news reached England that Pope Gregory and his cardinals had walked in procession from church to church to return thanks for this colossal murder. Cannons were fired, streets illuminated, medals struck and pictures painted to celebrate the deed of blood. Cardinal Orsini was sent to Paris "to congratulate the King." Never had the rightful doom of heresy been more impressively illustrated.

The sensation in England was profound. Rome reappeared as the representative of a religion which, as has been said, "made humanity a crime." The fear and

hatred of popery was increased a thousandfold. Order was with the utmost difficulty preserved in England, where movements of retaliation against the Papists were openly threatened. The popularity of those who advocated the abolition of every shred and tatter of Romanist practice was immensely increased. The Puritans within the Church who were for reforming her altogether by making a clean sweep of sacerdotal vestments and ritual were provided with new argument. We are therefore not surprised that those who were extreme anti-episcopal and anti-prelatical men, like Browne, found an audience and made converts. England, indeed, had not forgotten, and was never to forget, the reign of terror when Mary was on the throne, and Bonner and Gardiner indulged their vengeance against the Protestants. The general disappointment was keen when it was found that Elizabeth had no intention of favouring Puritanism, or permitting Protestant forms to express Protestant theories.

Thomas Cartwright's extraordinary popularity at Cambridge was due to his scholarly exposition of New Testament Christianity. He, like Browne, destroyed his licence to preach. "He had come to understand," says Mr. Froude, "that the so-called 'Holy Orders' in their transcendental sense were things of the past. . . . The sole credentials of a teacher which he consented to recognise were the intellect and spirit which had been received direct from God." He denounced the vestments, pluralities and non-residence. "He maintained that those who held offices should do the duties of those offices; and that high places in the Commonwealth belonged to merit." He thought Bishops and Deacons should be "recalled to the apostolic pattern"; "Bishops should be elected only by the Church, and ministers were only ministers when called to

a spiritual charge." The great Cecil declined to censure these opinions and seemed to think they were in the nature of common-sense. But Whitgift was put up to answer Cartwright; care was also taken that orthodoxy should be supported by more obvious arguments than Whitgift's. Cartwright was deprived of his fellowship, expelled the University, and eventually driven into exile. "It were an intolerable delicacy," he said, simply and nobly, "if he could not give up a little ease and commodity for that whereunto his life was due if it had been asked; or that he would grudge to dwell in another corner of the world for that cause for which he ought to be ready altogether to depart out of it."

Though Cartwright was thus driven from the country it must not be assumed that he had gained no victory. This harsh treatment of the men who were the most effective and consistent antagonists of Rome awakened keen resentment among the people, and was remembered many years afterwards when the day of public reckoning came. Fuller calls Cartwright "the chief of the Nonconformists" who already had begun to find "favour" in Parliament. Cartwright was never a Nonconformist in the sense of advocating separation from the Church of England. He was rather a leader of that remarkable and numerous body of "nonconforming members of the Church of England"—to use Dean Stanley's phrase—whose efforts were directed to moulding that institution more after the pattern of Geneva. Encouraged by the favour of Parliament, the Nonconformists, according to Fuller, "presumed to erect a presbytery at Wandsworth in Surrey. Eleven elders were chosen therein, and their offices and generall rules (by them to be observed) agreed upon and described. . . . This was the *firstborn* of all *Presbyteries* in England, and *secundum usum Wandsworth*

as much honoured by some as *secundum usum Sarum* by others." Fuller goes on to explain that at first their leaders were "against ministers' attire and the common prayer-booke," but that later reformers "indeavoured the modelling of a new discipline, and it was not long before both streams uniting together *Nonconformity* began to bear a large and great Channell in the City of London."

Yet as we can see clearly to-day this effort to graft Presbytery upon a system such as Anglicanism, which is in its essence sacerdotal, had no hopes of success. The future of the anti-sacerdotal movement lay with those who for the sake of a more spiritual order were prepared to separate from the Anglican Church, and establish free Christian communities according to the New Tesment model as they understood it. It is perhaps hardly to be wondered at that the hand of the ecclesiastical authorities was heaviest upon those who were so greatly daring. Separate religious communities and organisations invited the verdict of schism. It was a sufficient retort that if this be schism the independent existence of the Church of England in its definite separation from the Church of Rome was schism on a vaster scale. But it is too much to expect ecclesiasticism to be logical; and the men who busied themselves in stamping out the Separatists had not time to cultivate the historic sense. A man might believe nothing, live a loose life, and yet remain an object of toleration to the ecclesiastics; the one man who would not be allowed to live under their rule was the man of blameless character and conduct who yet had an obstinate prejudice in favour of worshipping God according to New Testament simplicity.

As we have seen, Robert Browne's year of literary activity was 1582. In that year the sheets of his three pamphlets already mentioned must have been sent

over to England from Middelberg. They were apparently bound by Thomas Gybson, of Bury St. Edmunds, who, but for a timely submission, would have perished for his rashness. Two other Bury Nonconformists were less pliable. These were John Copping and Elias Thacker. Copping was accused of treason for denying that Queen Elizabeth was the head of the Church. He was in prison for the seven years between 1576 and 1583. The imprisonment cannot have been very close, or he must have been in active confederacy with like-minded men and women outside, for eventually both he and Thacker were accused of being great "dispersers" of Robert Browne's works. In Strype's Annals there is set forth a "reply" by the Bury justices of the peace to the Bishop of Norwich in which appeal is made to "my Lord Chief Justice of England" (Sir Christopher Wray) "and the Master of the Rolls that now is" that the Bishop may be ordered to remove Copping and Thacker "to his prison at Norwich." The justices express the fear that if the accused men remain in their prison they will infect others; and they add somewhat contemptuously that it is to be assumed the Bishop has kept Copping and Thacker at Bury "rather for stales to catch and endanger men with than for any good intended to themselves or any other."

This appeal is not dated, but we know its effect. Copping and Thacker were not removed to Norwich as the petitioners requested. The "infection" so much dreaded had spread in Bury, and where the disease was raging the cure must be applied. At the beginning of June, 1583, no less a personage than the Lord Chief Justice himself presided at the Bury Assizes, and the two Separatists were set to answer for their lives inasmuch as they had denied Queen Elizabeth's right to the headship of the Church of Christ in England, and had

"dispersed" the heretical works of Robert Browne and Richard Harrison. Thomas Gybson, the bookbinder, was arraigned with them, but he failed to play the man, and saved his life at the expense of his conscience. We know few details of the trial. Probably it did not last long. The Chief Justice reported subsequently to the Lord Treasurer that "the two men acknowledged her Majestie chieffe ruler civilie, for so ys ther terms, and no further." The men were simply contending for what the Puritans afterwards loved to call "the Crown Rights of Jesus." The report went on to say that they "commended all thinges in the saide books (of Browne and Harrison) to be good and godlye." As usual, they were argued with at great length, but to no purpose. We can well believe that the Chief Justice was loth to proceed. It was not the time to hang even the extremest Protestants when Rome was red-handed with the blood of the Huguenots, and English hearts were hot against her. But it had evidently been decided to "make an example" of these men before separatism had spread too far. Sentence of death was pronounced, and judgment executed with such indecent haste, that Thacker was taken out and hanged immediately. He was, of course, entitled to appeal for his life to the Council or to the Queen. He had no chance. Scarcely had the Chief Justice pronounced sentence when Thacker was told to prepare himself to die forthwith. They hanged him on Thursday, June 4, and Copping the following day, burning a pile of the condemned literature with them, and looking to this barbarity of punishment to terrorise the people and prevent the spread of Separatist opinions. Dr. Dexter reminds us of a saying of Governor Bradford's about the cruelty used towards these two men. "God gave them courage to bear it and to make this answer: 'My lord, your face we fear

not, and for your threats we care not, and to come to your read service we dare not.' "

The executions of John Copping and Elias Thacker at the beginning of June were followed towards the end of the month by a *Queen's Proclamation* "against certain seditious and scismatical Bookes and Libelles." This latter was a tremendous document in which Robert Browne and Richard Harrison are denounced by name, and information is given that their books have been "secretly solde, published and dispersed." Unlearned people are in danger therefrom, wherefore her Majesty's love of her subjects prompts her to "straightly charge and commaunde that all maner of persons what soever who have any of the sayde Bookes or any of like nature in his or their custodie"—do, in short, bring them in forthwith that they may be "burned or utterly defaced." If any persons after this proclamation "be so hardy as to put in print or writing, sell, set foorth, receive, give out, or distribute" these books they will do so "at their uttermost perils." The intention was, of course, to heighten the effect of the public executions of the two Brownists earlier in the month.

These severe measures were proof that a change was impending in the policy of the Church. Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, was slowly dying. His retirement from actual office had been enforced by Elizabeth, but no successor was appointed in his lifetime. The exercise of authority, however, had fallen to other, and more masterful hands. Grindal belonged to the type of prelate that it is the true distinction of the English Church to have produced. Gentle, scholarly, tolerant, high-minded, he was rather concerned to reform the undoubted scandals of the Church than to quarrel with those who preferred another fashion of worship and government. It had been his difficult

duty to succeed Matthew Parker, whose spirit of avarice and corruption had enriched himself as much as it had degraded religion. Grindal had set his face against these abuses. Neither was he guilty of any intolerance unless he was overborne by fiercer spirits who were impatient of his kindly and benign methods. He was a sturdy Protestant; and steadily refused to discountenance what were known as the "prophesyings," meetings for testimony and experience held in his time in many parish churches. Elizabeth, to whom freedom within the Church was synonymous with disorder, treated her Archbishop with great insolence for his refusal to stamp out "prophesyings." But Grindal's was a strong spirit as well as a gentle one; and in a letter to Elizabeth he reminded her that though she was a great and mighty princess, she was mortal "and accountable to God." For his part "he could not without offence of the majesty of God send out injunctions for suppressing the exercises." Elizabeth was furious. She was determined to show that her headship of the Church was not nominal but real. By an order from the Star Chamber Grindal was "sequestered from the archiepiscopal functions" for six months; and though he made a partial submission later, he never recovered favour, nor enjoyed full possession of his archbishopric. When Copping and Thacker were being hanged at Bury, this good, kind old man, himself at peace with all the world, was dying blind and in disgrace; and a new order of things was to be born at his death.

The Archbishopric was immediately conferred on John Whitgift, who had been long marked out by the Queen's favour for this preferment. Whitgift was in almost every particular unlike his predecessor. He was no great scholar. He had that fatal lack of perspective which is the characteristic of minds largely educated

on the writings of the "Fathers." Much dealing with unruly undergraduates had given him an exaggerated notion of the value of discipline. In his controversy with Cartwright he had won applause rather from the pedants than the thinkers. There is no need to question his sincerity. In his own hard and narrow way he was intensely sincere. He had the same belief in force as the supreme remedy that Gardiner and Bonner had in Mary's reign. The difficulty which strikes us so forcibly of reconciling his own vehement Churchmanship with ardent Erastianism probably never troubled him. He was not offended that Elizabeth should treat Archbishop Grindal as if he were no more than some petty servant of her household guilty of insubordination. Elizabeth did not deserve to have great Churchmen of high spirit and fearless address, and she got her deserts. The successor of Grindal, like the predecessor of Grindal, was obsequious and servile where it most behoved him to be faithful and candid. In him Elizabeth found the very instrument she wanted for dealing vengeance upon those who had the temerity to believe that religion was for the mind and the heart, and not a set of mechanical forms merely. In carrying out this policy Whitgift strengthened the movement he was most concerned to suppress. In his fatuity he persevered in persecuting what, had he known it, was the true spirit of England. Elizabeth and Whitgift sowed the wind; Charles and Laud reaped the whirlwind. It was Whitgift, and the successors in his spirit, who, as Froude says, eventually "wearied the world with them, and brought a King and an Archbishop to the scaffold." When the reins of authority fell into Whitgift's hands, the troubles of the Puritans both within and without the Church became extreme. He published early in 1584 the famous three articles to be subscribed by all ministers of the

Church. It will conduce to clearness to set these forth in full.

(1) That Her Majesty under God hath and ought to have the sovereignty and rule over all persons born within her realms, dominions, and countries, of what estate, either ecclesiastical or temporal, soever they be; and that no other foreign power, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual within Her Majesty's said realms, dominions or countries.

(2) That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth nothing in it contrary to the Word of God; and that the same may be lawfully used; and that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed, in public prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, and none other.

(3) That he alloweth the Book of articles of religion, agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the clergy in Convocation, holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562, and set forth by Her Majesty's authority, and that he believeth all the articles therein contained to be agreeable to the Word of God.

The choice presented to the Church's ministers was to be—subscription or suspension. As invariably happens when the idol of uniformity is set up, while the thoughtless and characterless find no difficulty in making the compliant bow, earnest men, and men of "tender consciences," are cruelly divided between loyalty to their Church, and intellectual dishonesty. Suspensions were frequent, and in nearly every case men of high character and ability were involved. Even the instrument of the Three Articles was insufficient for Whitgift's purpose. He drew up a series of twenty-four interrogatories, to

satisfy himself that in every minute detail of ritual there was exact conformity to prescribed order. This was too much for a man like Cecil, the Lord High Treasurer. He had the broad statesmanlike spirit, and he saw the mischief of this eagerness to tithe the mint and anise and cummin, while the weightier matters of the law were neglected. A letter written by him to Whitgift is fortunately still extant in which he says he has just seen these "twenty-four articles of great length and curiosity, found in a Romish stile." "Which I have read," he goes on, "and find so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances as I think the Inquisitors of Spain use not so many questions to comprehend and to trap their preyes. I know your Canonists can defend these with all their perticels, but surely, under your Grace's correction, this judicial and canonical sifting of poor ministers is not to edify or reform. And in charity, I think they ought not to answer to all these nice points, except they were very notorious offenders in Papistry or heresy. . . . I conclude that according to my simple judgment this kind of proceeding is too much savouring of the Romish inquisition; *and is rather a device to seek for offenders than to reform any.* This is not the charitable instruction that I thought was intended."

Men like Grindal and Cecil might have gone far to save the Church of England. It was her unspeakable misfortune that in a critical hour John Whitgift was at the helm. The remonstrances of Lord Burghley had no effect upon him except to confirm him in his own judgment and policy. In his reply to Burghley he could find no better argument than to fall back on the procedure of the Star Chamber! He "could see no cause why our judicial and canonical proceedings in this poynt should be misliked." Finally he informs Cecil that he is deter-

mined to do his duty though "the wicked tongues of the uncharitable" do call him "Tyrant, Pope, Papist, Knave." The Lord Treasurer returned to the charge later on, but he got nothing by his interference. Whitgift's second reply was fulsome enough in its language towards Cecil, but open enough in its avowal of the obduracy of his purpose. To read these letters is to have it forced upon one that had Whitgift been High Priest in the day of our Lord, and responsible as was Caiaphas for order and uniformity in the Jewish Church, he would have sacrificed Christ to his sense of duty, and have done it in the spirit of his favourite motto, "pro ecclesia Dei."

The bitterness of the controversy within the Church was due to the existence of two irreconcilable ideals. Fuller calls them Hierarchy and Presbytery. Hierarchy had three advantages—it was "commanded by authority, established by law, and confirmed by general practice." Those who favoured Presbytery were entitled to retort that they supposed episcopacy in Protestantism would be different in form and spirit from prelacy in Catholicism. Presbytery, says Fuller, was "formed by some *Clergiemen* favoured by many of the *gentry*, and followed by more of the *common sort*." He continues, "what won them most repute was their ministers' painfull preaching in populous places"—"painfull" being, of course, entirely a complimentary adjective implying intensity of earnestness—"it being observed in England that those who hold the *Helme* of the *pulpit* always steere people's hearts as they please." "O, how wofull the *vessel* of the *English Church!*" exclaims our quaint historian, "whilst her ὑπηρέται, her ministers and under-rowers, some tugged it one way and others towing it another; enough almost to split her in pieces, with the violence of their contrary *Discipline*." From

Fuller's day to our own this quarrel of ideals within the Church of England has gone on with varying fortune, each quoting one part of the Prayer-Book against the other, Hierarchy entrenching itself in the Rubrics and Presbytery in the Articles, but both parties to the dispute freely declaring that everything in the Book of Common Prayer ought faithfully to be believed and observed.

For the time being Hierarchy, however lacking in Scriptural authority or popular favour, had the argument of possession; as Presbytery was to know to its cost. In illustration of the Archbishop's method of procedure we cannot multiply instances, but something may be said to explain why Whitgift was so successful in making Separatists. His treatment of the saintly George Gifford, of Maldon in Essex, was typical. Gifford had been suspended by the Bishop of London for not subscribing the Three Articles. Even Strype, the faithful eulogist of Whitgift, whose reverential attitude will not permit him to discover any defect in his idol, pays honest tribute to the nobility of Gifford's parts. "He was valued much there for the good reformation he had made in that market-town by his preaching; whereby notorious sins reigned before his coming; and others had been by his diligence nourished and strengthened in grace and virtue (as the inhabitants in a petition to the Bishop in his behalf had set forth at large), and that in his life he was modest, discreet, and unreproveable; that he never used conventicle, but ever preached and catechised in the Church." In short, it was this manner of man that won the Church of England such affection and esteem as is still possessed among right-thinking people. But in Whitgift's eyes Gifford was nothing more or less than a disorderly person inasmuch as he had the temerity to keep a conscience. The broad-minded Burghley, consistent still in his thankless duty,

put in his plea for Gifford. He, perhaps, alone, clearly saw that Whitgift's intolerance must in the issue wreck the Church. The Archbishop's letter in reply was in his most vicious style. "It appeareth that the said Gifford is a ringleader of the rest. . . . I think it not convenient to grant him any further liberty or release of his suspension, until he have purged himself. His deserts may be such as will deserve deprivation." "Thus impartial and unmoveable," says the obsequious Strype, "was the Archbishop in the discharge of this commission!" "Impartial" and "unmoveable" are handsome words; it would be interesting to know what adjectives Lord Burghley applied to the Archbishop's attitude.

A very little reflection should have taught Whitgift better. Of all possible districts within his jurisdiction wherein to strike such a blow as this, Essex was the most dangerous. In no part of England were the memories of prelatical cruelty and bigotry more vivid and more terrible. Mary's bishops wrought with fire and sword wherever Protestantism had a firm hold; but the records of their work in Essex are probably the darkest and bloodiest. At Coggeshall, at Brentwood, at Braintree, at Maldon, at Horndon-on-the-Hill, at Rayleigh, Essex men were burned in the presence of their parents and their children, and great crowds who wept and prayed for them. Batches of Essex men were burned in Smithfield in one fire. Women were not spared. Mothers left their children for the stake; young lads of sixteen were as brave as veterans; and many described in the records as "maids" bore their testimony with equal courage. Colchester was again and again, and yet again, the scene of heroic fortitude. At Stratford, a lame man and a blind man were burned together. A month later thirteen martyrs suffered in the same place "with such love to each other and con-

stancy in our Saviour Christ, that it made all the lookers-on to marvel." In Chelmsford a preacher was beheaded and mutilated. Strange to say, these horrors failed of the desired effect. The people of Essex conceived no affection for prelacy because of them. Nowhere was the news of Elizabeth's succession received with greater joy and hope. Whitgift would have done better to have left Essex alone; but he had his own notion of what "pro ecclesia Dei" demanded, and to do him justice dangers and difficulties did not daunt him. *Nearly fifty preachers were silenced or deprived in Essex alone.* So serious was the situation that eight of the Privy Council—Burghley, of course, included, and the other names such famous ones as these, Warwick, Howard, Shrewsbury, Leicester, Croft, Walsingham—sent a remonstrance to Whitgift and Aylmer, Bishop of London. They assert that the best ministers are silenced while the worst men, guilty in many cases of drunkenness, immorality, gambling, and so forth, are left in possession. The Archbishop was unteachable. The parish churches were deserted; the hated "conventicles" were "held" in all parts. The movement for freedom of worship spread through the Eastern Counties with startling rapidity. When Parliament assembled in 1586 there was to be plain speaking as to the peril into which those in authority had brought the Church. Sir Walter Raleigh startled the House by declaring that he was afraid there were "near twenty thousand Brownists in England." The figure would seem to be impossible; but everywhere men and women, devout and earnest, were separating themselves from the Church of their fathers for the sake of a purer worship and a simpler faith. To this had the iron hand of Whitgift brought the Church he ruled and loved and honestly desired to serve.

CHAPTER IV.

The Congregational Martyrs.

That anyone should remain in the Church of England who "scrupled" anything of her prescribed doctrine and order was to Whitgift a thing intolerable; but on the other hand, if anyone left the Church of England for the sake of consistency, and proposed to teach outside her borders what it was illegal to teach inside, his case was worse. This was a sentiment by no means confined to the Bishops. Some of the Puritans within the Church on whom Whitgift's hand was heaviest were themselves very vehement against the legitimacy of separation. Gifford of Maldon, of whose suspension and imprisonment we have taken note, denounced the writings of Browne and Barrowe, who, little as he realised it, were his fellow-sufferers in the kindred interests of religious liberty and Christian truth. We have now reached a time when Robert Browne's recreancy as it was esteemed had caused him to be bitterly spoken of by those who entered into his labours. The cause of the Separatists needed new apologists. Even if Browne's pamphlets were still in circulation, little weight could attach to them when their author no longer professed their doctrines. It was at this time that Separatism found for expositor a man of very different calibre from Browne, less brilliant and ingenious, but with correspondingly greater strength of character and intellect;

and one who, while Browne was tamely reposing in his country rectory, defended the principles of Separatism by the awful, final, argument of martyrdom.

Every Free Church chronicler of to-day is interested in claiming for Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, and John Penry their honourable place in the making of English history. To do this it is not necessary to represent them other than they were, to disguise their limitations, or tone down their angularities of thought and conduct. We, who from our armchairs to-day, in pleasant enjoyment of hard-won liberties, read the story of the struggles against political or ecclesiastical tyranny, are inclined to bear hardly upon these men because in the rough and desperate conflict in which they were engaged they did not display all that smoothness of speech and courtesy of manner which we ourselves are studious to observe. English liberties were fought for, in honest, strenuous fashion, with weapons not always finely-edged and pointed, but efficient for their purpose by reason of the passion and power behind them. The adjectives and terms of reproach used by Barrowe will not compare for vigour and freedom with those used by Saint Athanasius in his theological controversies; yet by the modern reader who is perhaps not familiar with the popular dialectic of the period they are easily misunderstood. Even those who mention with reverence such names as Athanasius, Luther, Milton, Toplady, and Samuel Rutherford have hardly a tolerant word for Henry Barrowe, or the unknown author of the Martin Marprelate tracts. Yet it would be no exaggeration to say that there is not one of these revered names that would not suffer hopelessly in the popular estimation if the same canons of criticism were applied to their controversial writings which have been applied to the writings of Henry Barrowe. It has been said with truth,

again and again, that the early Separatists builded better than they knew. They contended for principles which contained consequences more far-reaching than they had any conception of. The Reformation had been fought and won for the right of private judgment in religion. The Separatists died to vindicate the right, yet even they had no adequate notion of its universal application. The position they boldly occupied had for necessary logical corollary the doctrine of toleration. The religious liberty they claimed and exercised in defiance of all persecution was not a liberty they were prepared to concede to everybody. It was left to their successors to discover the full value and meaning of their principles. But it argues little insight not to be able to perceive the essential nobility of their beliefs despite certain disfiguring limitations which were largely accidents due to the age in which they lived.

The head and front of the offending of Barrowe and Greenwood is set forth in the accusation presented against them when they were "convented before the High Commissioners for causes ecclesiastical in November, 1587, for their schismatical and seditious opinions." It was alleged as one of their tenets, "That all the Precise [*i.e.*, Puritans] which refuse the ceremonies of the Church, and yet preach in the same Church, strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, and are close hypocrites, and walk in a left-handed policy." To the ordinary straightforward Nonconformist the ethics of conformity has always been a curious study. The casuistry of those who sign unfeigned assent to creeds and articles they only partially believe, solemnly promise observance of rubrics which they habitually ignore, and vow allegiance to their "ordinary" which they have no intention of fulfilling, the Nonconformist is constitutionally incapable of understanding. Barrowe and Green-

wood maintained that the logical consequence of Nonconformity was separation; that the policy of the men who confessed their vehement dissent from the Church's standards but accepted the emoluments of the Church all the same was "a left-handed policy." Their straightforward counsel, gathered from the Scriptures, was "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Barrowe's celebrated reply to Lord Chancellor Hatton, who asked him at his examination what he thought of Whitgift, is not more remarkable for its boldness than for the pith of its contention. "He is a monster!" exclaimed Barrowe, vehemently, "a *miserable compound!* I know not what to make of him. He is *neither ecclesiastical nor civil;* even that second beast spoken of in the Revelation." The reference that Barrowe had in mind was to the words, "He shall cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell save he that hath the mark, even the name of the Beast, or the number of his name." Making all allowances for Barrowe's energy of language, nobody who reads the story of the action of Whitgift and others at this period can deny its truth. The Archbishop was "neither ecclesiastical nor civil"; the office he exercised was "a miserable compound." Barrowe had struck, in his fiery way, a note that would not cease to resound through the stormy controversial years that were to follow, and that eventually would become a master-note. Gradually it would come to be recognised that officers of the Church, by relinquishing the civil functions they had usurped, would recover the spiritual functions they had neglected or forgotten. It

was of the first importance to the development of the liberty of the subject in England that the ecclesiastical should be clearly separated from the civil power.

In the indictment referred to above, Barrowe is described as "gentleman," and Greenwood as "clerk." They were both Cambridge men. Barrowe would appear to have been decidedly the elder of the two, as he graduated at Clare Hall in 1569–70, while Greenwood graduated at Corpus Christi in 1580–81. Barrowe, who had led a very reckless life at college, turned his attention to the law, entered at Gray's Inn, "and attended her Majesty's Court." Bradford's account of his conversion is to the effect that as he and a companion were passing a church one Lord's Day they heard the preacher very loud in his sermon. Barrowe proposed that they should go in. "Tush!" said the other. "What, shall we go to hear a man talk?" In they both went, however, and at least one of the two came out a changed man. Lord Bacon's words have often been quoted where he says that the Brownists had not "been much known at all" but for Browne's pamphlets, "and had not also one Barrowe, being a gentleman of a good house, but one that lived in London at ordinaries, and there learned to argue in table-talk, and so was very much known in the city and abroad, made a leap from a vain and libertine youth to a preciseness in the highest degree—the strangeness of which alteration made him very much spoken of." Greenwood was very probably influenced towards Puritanism while at Cambridge. His study of the New Testament, however, carried him beyond the Puritan conformists of the Cartwright school. At the close of his University curriculum he took orders, but as his convictions gradually settled in the direction of Separatism, he sought refuge in a private chaplaincy with the well-known Puritan, Lord Richard Rich of

THE VILLAGE OF SHIPDAM, HENRY BARROWE'S BIRTHPLACE.

Rochford, Essex. Lord Rich was the second son of the first Lord Rich, and brother of Robert, afterwards Earl of Warwick. He had given proof of his earnestness by suffering imprisonment. The story is worth preserving. A certain Robert Wright, who had been tutor to the Earl of Essex, Lord Rich's brother-in-law, having scruples about episcopal ordination, went to Antwerp, where he was ordained by Thomas Cartwright. He returned to England to be private chaplain to Lord Rich. He had come to believe and to teach that "the election of ministers ought to be by the flock or congregation." Lord Rich appears to have concurred, and a church was formed at Rochford Hall. We are told that "they did not withdraw themselves from the parish church, but held their meetings in the hall, usually at eight o'clock in the evening." As to the character of the services we have interesting testimony. Lady Bacon, the mother of Francis, Lord Bacon, wrote to Lord Burghley about them thus: "I hear them in their public exercises as a chief duty commanded by God, and I also confess, as one that hath found mercy, that I have profited more in the inward feeling of God's holy will . . . by such sincere and sound opening of the Scriptures . . . than I did by hearing occasional services at St. Paul's, well-nigh twenty years together." This was no reason to prevail with Bishop Aylmer, who was mightily concerned about these disorders. The upshot was that Wright was lodged in the Fleet and Lord Rich in the Marshalsea. Eventually they issued a joint petition to the Privy Council; and Wright having made what was regarded as a submission, they were released, and Lord Rich must have died immediately afterwards.

This was the Lord Rich at whose Hall in Essex John Greenwood acted as assistant chaplain. Whether

Barrowe made his acquaintance at Rochford, or whether the two men met in London, or in Norfolk, we have no means of knowing. What is certain is that on a Sunday early in October, 1586, John Greenwood was reading the Scriptures in the house of a certain Henry Martin, "in the parish of St. Andrew-in-the-Wardrobe, St. Paul's Churchyard." The Bishop of London's spies got wind of it; the house was invaded and Greenwood carried away to the Clink Prison. Some six weeks later Barrowe was in London, and went straightway to visit Greenwood at the Clink. It is probable that he suspected no danger, and it is certain that if the authorities had acted within the law he had none to fear. His name and character, however, were too well known for him to be allowed to escape for the sake of a mere technical breach of the law. The keeper of the prison promptly locked him up without any warrant, and then posted off to Lambeth to get one. At Lambeth the value of the prize captured was held to excuse any illegality of method, and the Bishop's pursuivants were sent back to bring Barrowe to the Archbishop for examination. The prisoner protested to no purpose that he was "under arrest and imprisoned without warrant and without law." Whitgift esteemed himself above the law, but even had it been so, the action of the keeper of the Clink was not justified. There was much fencing on the subject of the lawfulness of an oath. Finally Barrowe refused to swear, and demanded that witnesses should be produced against him. One part of the examination is worth recording as an illustration of Barrowe's spirit.

Archbishop: "You are then a gentleman?"

Barrowe: "After the manner of our country, a gentleman."

Archbishop: "Serve you any man?"

Barrowe : " No ; I am God's free-man."
Archbishop : " Have you any lands ? "
Barrowe : " No, nor fees."
Archbishop : " How live you ? "
Barrowe : " By God's goodness and my friends."

He was sent to the Gatehouse, and eight days later there was a second abortive examination. Barrowe will not take the oath, and the Archbishop dismisses him in a fury. " Where is his keeper ? " he broke out. " You shall not prattle here. Away with him, clap him up close, close ; let no man come at him. I will make him tell another tale ere I have done with him."

Five months elapse before the High Commissioners sit again for Barrowe's examination. The question of taking the oath is raised again, and Barrowe scores his first victory. " By God's grace I will answer nothing but the truth," he said ; and the High Commissioners have to rest content with the assurance. The course of the enquiry proves intensely interesting. The Bishops are determined to identify separation with treason by forcing the confession that the Queen was *not* the head of the Church. Barrowe, with unusual prudence, has asked leave to write down his answers, and they are at once careful and uncompromising. This one for instance : " No Prince, neither the whole world, neither the Church itself, may make any laws for the Church other than Christ hath already left in His Word." It was Barrowe's second success ; for he split the civilians of the High Commission from the ecclesiastics. The Bishops were indignant, but the Chief Justice declared that Barrowe had answered " very directly and compendiously." Later on the Chief Justice confessed that he spake well, when " the Bishops commanded the question and answer to be blotted out." In a re-examination Barrowe declared that he was ready " to give and per-

form as much unto my prince as any true subject ought to do." The Archbishop, however, had drafted two questions that could only be intended to entrap him into statements that could be quoted as treasonable.

Question : "May the Church of Christ, if the Prince 'deny or refuse' to rectify abuses, reform them 'without staying for the Prince'?"

Answer : "Yes, may and ought though all the princes in the world should prohibit the same upon pain of death."

Here is the whole pith of Browne's contention in "Reformation without Tarying for Anie."

Question : "May the Church of Christ excommunicate the Queen, and if so, who is to do it?"

Answer : "Yes, and it is to be done by the pastor."

Whatever else Henry Barrowe was, he was clearly a High Churchman, in the best sense of the much-abused word, believing that in the true Church of Christ there can be "no respect of persons," and maintaining the freedom and authority of the Church after a fashion that makes the servile Erastians who tried him seem singularly lacking in dignity and courage.

Six weeks later Barrowe and Greenwood stood together at "Newgate Sessions" to answer to the Bishop of London, who was present in two capacities which in this country are not usually combined—accuser and judge. They were, of course, condemned; and this time they were committed to the Fleet. For the next *ten months* they were fellow-sufferers in the vilest of London prisons. Much of the time they were shut up in close confinement, air, light, exercise, all practically denied them. A certain "lamentable petition" addressed to the Queen has been traced to Barrowe's pen. It contains some records from which the miseries of the imprisoned Nonconformists at this time can be con-

ceived. We shall never know the number of these victims of ecclesiastical tyranny, who were not persuaded of their error even by the argument of a "cold and noisome prison." It is set forth that some among them were bound hand and foot "with bolts and fetters of iron." Some had been put into the "myll" and had been "beaten with cudgells in their prisons." It was inevitable that many should succumb. Mention is made of two aged widows who "died of the infection of the prison." Nicholas Crane, sixty-six years of age, was faithful unto death; John Chandler, "having a wife and eight children," conquered death by dying, as the Puritans loved to say. The horror of these Elizabethan gaols, dark, fœtid, foul, fever-haunted, where those newly incarcerated often had to lie side by side with the sick and dying, and where men and women suffering for religious faith had to endure the proximity of felons, and breathe the atmosphere of blasphemy, is indescribable. There are known instances of those who on their release dare not return to their wives and children because of the horrible prison infection which clung to them long after their enlargement. This was the suffering of the prisoners; and it was often immeasurably aggravated by the knowledge that, outside, women and children were starving with few or none to pity them, waiting anxiously, and too often vainly, for some message of hope that the husband and father might be restored to them.

Anyone who is offended by Barrowe's violence of utterance at his next examination will do well to remember these things. The men who sat in the Privy Council to make inquisition into his opinions knew probably very little of the cruelty and misery of the scenes which had entered like iron into Barrowe's soul. To him these authorities had the blood of the saints upon their hands.

Nicholas Crane and John Chandler had been judicially murdered. In the dungeons of the Fleet from which he had come, men and women, earnest and devout, were dying of fever unheard and uncondemned. If he could have been quite cool and self-possessed he might have defended himself to better purpose, but his very failure on this occasion will be counted to him for righteousness by those who have imagination enough to understand the causes. The fact, however, remains that he alienated the sympathy of Burghley by his denunciation of the use of the Prayer-book as "idolatry." It must be remembered in his excuse that by exalting the Prayer-book as faultless, and making exact conformity to it equivalent to Christianity, the Bishops had done their best to invite and deserve this verdict. We who have lived to see the possibility of an idolatry of the Bible owing to equally narrow theories of verbal inspiration need not be surprised that Barrowe and his comrades thought and spoke as they did of those who idolised the Book of Common Prayer. He had an interesting passage with Burghley, too, about the payment of tithes. It was objected against him "that he held it unlawful for the Parliament to make a law that the ministers should live by tithes, or the people pay them." Barrowe declares himself a pure Voluntaryist. "I would have you," he says to Burghley, "withhold none of your goods from helping him (the minister); neither rich, nor poor, are exempted from this duty." Later on in his examination came his denunciation of Whitgift as "a miserable compound," "neither ecclesiastical nor civil." He had spoken his mind, but he had done his cause and that of his fellow-prisoners no good; and he knew it. Humbly and pathetically, he writes in prison of his need to pray earnestly to "set a more careful watch before" his "lips."

For the next five years Barrowe was in confinement.

Greenwood appears to have had a few months' liberty, but apart from this he was Barrowe's fellow-prisoner. The amazing thing about this period is the quantity and quality of literature which the two men succeeded in producing. They could no longer go about from conventicle to conventicle to propagate their faith; and we cannot suppose them ignorant of the risks they ran in committing their opinions to the printed page. But they had reached the point where their convictions were dearer to them than life itself, and we can well believe the chief satisfaction of these cruel years was to know that the cause was being carried forward by printed pamphlet and volume. As Dr. Dexter says, every word was "clandestinely inscribed upon contraband paper with surreptitious ink." They must have worn their eyes out writing "by the dim light of dirty and grated windows." Keepers had to be eluded; proof had to be made of the loyalty and courage of friends to smuggle the precious manuscripts out of the prison precincts. Sometimes it was Robert Stokes who thus put his own life in jeopardy; sometimes it was Greenwood's wife, or "Cycely, the maid-servant." Stokes and a certain Robert Bull went to the Low Countries with the "copy," and "one Hanse" at Dort did the printing. The sheets were then committed to Robert Stokes' "clock-bag," and warily smuggled back into England, where "one Mychens" appears to have had them bound and distributed. It was a wonderful triumph of earnestness and enterprise; and in consequence we possess to-day the vivid narratives of the examinations of the prisoners and their conferences with learned divines, as well as their positive doctrine stated both against the Anglican conformists on the one hand, and the followers of Cartwright and Gifford on the other.

The conferences with the divines appointed to argue with them are valuable to us as showing how decided were the Free Church views of the two prisoners. But as might be supposed, they were otherwise unconvincing and unsatisfactory. Barrowe and Greenwood were resolute, unmoveable, uncompromising, and often disrespectful. Neither can we believe that those appointed to reason with them made the best of their case. So far as one of the undoubted objects of the conferences was concerned, the failure was complete. There was always a chance that by some adroit question Barrowe might be brought into disagreement with Greenwood. To promote this end they were conferred with separately as well as together. The result was that the prisoners showed more substantial agreement than their examiners. One of the latter actually asserted that the Archbishops exercised a "merely civil" function. Greenwood insisted on having this extraordinary statement down in writing, but the second learned divine demurred. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the early conferences was the fact that Dr. Lancelot Andrews, then vicar of St. Giles, and afterwards Bishop of Winchester, was one of those who took part. It could be wished he had made an appearance more in accordance with what we know of his character. His remark to Barrowe, "For close imprisonment you are most happy. The solitary and contemplative life I hold the most blessed life; it is the life I would choose," smacks of Mr. Pecksniff, and would have been unpardonable in a far less scrupulous person than Andrews. Similarly his apparent attempt to trap Barrowe into indicating the meeting-place of a "congregation of saints," which has been referred to, shows how difficult it must have been to undertake a conference of this sort, and not yield to the temptation to play the spy. "Though I knew, I

purpose not to tell you," was the Separatist's emphatic answer. It is impossible to linger on all the details. The formal trial began on March 11, 1593. On that day Barrowe and Greenwood admitted their responsibility for certain printed pamphlets. This was preliminary evidence for use in the proceedings of March 23. On the latter date it was urged against them that they were revolutionists and traitors, bent on destroying the monarchy and the Church, and "abrogating of all good laws and ordinances, even at one clapp which had been in making for the good government of this Church above a thousand and fower hundred years." On this outrageous indictment they were convicted and condemned. In what followed we prefer to believe that we may read the vacillation of the authorities due to an uneasy conscience rather than a deliberate aggravation of the sufferings of the prisoners. The fact, however, remains that three several times Barrowe and Greenwood were called upon to make preparation for death. The day following the trial they were "brought out of the Limbo" and their "irons smitten off." The cart was waiting to convey them to Tyburn, and they were made ready to be bound to it. At this moment a reprieve came. A new conference was proposed. Barrowe's reply is sad and noble. "Our time was now too short in the world." It should be devoted not "unto controversies so much as unto more profitable and comfortable considerations." Yet they were willing, if two other brethren might be joined with them. To this there was no reply. On the last day of March the dread summons came to them again, "very early" in the morning. This time there was apparently to be no miscarriage. They were taken out secretly in the fatal tumbril to the place of execution, and "being tied by the necks to the tree were permitted to say a few words." Both men spoke

briefly and were now expecting the end; when lo! a messenger from her Majesty with a second reprieve! That this supposed act of mercy was popular may be concluded from "the exceeding rejoicing and applause of all the people—both at the place of execution and in the ways, streets, and houses," as the prisoners returned. New hope had come to them; and Barrowe felt encouraged to write to "an honourable lady and countess of his kindred," asking her interest with the Queen on behalf of Greenwood and himself. In it he tells the story of the two reprieves, and asks that his kinswoman will assure her Majesty of their "entire faith unto God, unstained loyalty to her Majesty, innocency and good conscience toward all men."

Possibly this appeal might have succeeded; but other influences were at work in the realm which determined the fate of the two Separatists. The Bishops had introduced into the House of Lords a Bill directed against "the Barrowists and Brownists." By this Bill Separatist opinions were to be punishable as felony. The Lower House was Puritan enough in sympathy to dislike an extreme measure of this kind, and there was much ado to get it passed. Ultimately the Bill was "minced," so that it was commonly said it would "not reach any man deserving favour." The Bishops took the rebuff unkindly; and there is but little doubt that their summary dealing with the arch-offenders, Barrowe and Greenwood, was "to spite the Nether House," and demonstrate their own authority. It was on the 6th of April, 1593, that the two martyrs made a last procession to the place of death. The officials took them out "as early and secretly as well they could in such a case." There were to be no popular demonstrations in favour of the condemned men this time. We know few details, and indeed it is probable there was little to tell.

CEFN BRITH, NEAR LLANGAMMARCH (BRECON), BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN PENRY

"Two aged widows" followed the cart to the gallows bearing the "winding-sheets." Arrived at Tyburn tree, the hangman did his work, and the sufferings of Barrowe and Greenwood were over at last. Governor Bradford adds the story, which has some little confirmation, that Queen Elizabeth asked the learned Dr. Reynolds what he thought of these men. Reynolds was loth to speak, but being "charged upon his allegiance to do so," he answered, "That he was persuaded if they had lived they would have been two as worthy instruments of the Church of God as have been raised up in this age." Her Majesty sighed, and said no more. And afterwards riding to a park by the place where they were executed, and being willing to take further information concerning them, demanded of the Right Honourable Earl of Cumberland—that was present when they suffered—what end they made? He answered, "A very godly end, and prayed for your Majesty and the State."

Two months later, on the 29th of May, John Penry died the same death in the same cause. He is the most lovable, as his life is the most romantic and adventurous, of the Separatist martyrs. "Born and bred in the mountains of Wales," he began his religious life as a Papist. He was educated at both Cambridge and Oxford, and in the process his Romish prejudices dropped away from him, while his study of the New Testament carried him ultimately far beyond the current moderatism into Separatism and Independency. He had taken orders at Oxford, and "was esteemed by many," Anthony Wood tells us, "a tolerable scholar, an edifying preacher, and a good man." He also informs us that Penry was known "to have more than ordinary learning in him." What kindled the young man's indignation against the existing state of things was the spiritual condition of Wales. The English prelates were too busy suppressing

the Puritan preachers to spare time to deal with the real godlessness of the land; and anyone who pleaded as Penry did in his first treatise, that "some order may be taken for the preaching of the Gospel among the people," wrote himself down a heretic and a malcontent. It was not only his scathing condemnation of the non-resident clergy—"non-residences have cut the throte of our Church"—that counted against him; he had the temerity to believe that a true preacher might even "live of the Gospel" in the sixteenth century as much as in the first. Many of the old Puritan pamphlets are exceeding dull and hard to read; but Penry's words burn and glow after three hundred years. This passage for example:—"They whose hearts the Lord hath touched would thresh to get their living rather than the people should want preaching. Our gentlemen and people, if they knew the good that insueth preaching, would be soon brought to contribute. They would be constrained thereunto. Salvation were not bought too deare with the very flesh of our armes."

For this tract Penry was seized and thrown into prison. No reason was vouchsafed to him. After a month's incarceration he was examined. It then appeared that his heresy lay in denying that a clergyman who never preached was a true minister of Christ. "I thank God," said the dauntless young heretic, "that I ever knew such a heresy, as I will, by the grace of God, sooner leave my life than leave it." Whitgift, who was present, promised him he should be made to recant it. "Never, God willing, so long as I live," said Penry. Soon after his examination, he was released. No reason had been given for his arrest, none was given for his liberation. He seized the opportunity while he had it, and possessed himself of a private printing-press for the dissemination of what we should call Free Church

literature. In the very year when the Romish peril from without was shadowing England, to disappear for ever with the shattered hulks of the Armada, Penry was pleading against peril within, the spirit of prelacy in his own loved land. He had affirmed the Voluntary principle; he now appealed to the people to act upon it. "For shame," he said, "bestow something that is yours to have salvation made known unto you." Through all his writings there rings the courageous note of personal devotion. In the midst of peril, no shadow of a fear rests upon his soul. "Be it known that in this cause I am not afraid of earth. If I perish, I perish." Against a faith of this type all the weapons of Whitgift were weak. No martyr that ever died for his testimony uttered words more memorable than Penry. "If I might live upon this earth the days of Methuselah twice told, and that in no less comfort than Peter, James, and John were in the Mount; and after this life might be sure of the Kingdom of Heaven; yet to gain all this, I durst not go from the former testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ." And again, "If my blood were an ocean sea, and every drop thereof were a lyfe unto me, I would give them all by the help of the Lord for the maintenance of the same my confession." To this loyalty to truth, his loyalty to the Queen and Commonwealth was alone subordinate. "If my death," he wrote at the last, "can procure any quietness unto the Churche of God, and unto the State of my Prince, and his kingdom wherein I was borne, glad I am that I had a lyfe to bestowe in this service."

It is safe to say that even Whitgift's intolerance would not have been equal to sending Penry to the gallows if it had not been for the rage excited by the Martin Marprelate Tracts. The authorship of these Tracts was attributed to Penry. He denied it; and others who

had every opportunity of knowing—Udall for example —denied it also. There was no shadow of a proof. But the Bishops, smarting from the lashes of Martin's whip of satire, seem to have felt it incumbent upon them to hang somebody. The real author was, unfortunately, unknown ; but Penry had been hunted down, and it was notorious that Penry's " Pilgrim Press " had been used to print the Tracts. This was enough for his accusers. In the absence of proof, prejudice could be made to serve. Penry was sacrificed to avenge the wrongs which the Bishops had suffered at the merciless hands of Martin Marprelate. The Martin Marprelate Tracts belong not more to the history of our ecclesiastical life than to the history of our literature. They are now recognised as prose satires of quite extraordinary genius. Criticism has not succeeded in solving the problem of their authorship ; but it has established their claim to a permanent place among English classics. When Martin began to write, the case of the Separatists was almost desperate Most of their leaders were in durance vile. The gaols of London were crowded with their most courageous members. The Bishops had a terrible weapon at their command for the eradication of dissent, and we have seen already that they did not scruple to use it. Then suddenly the despised sectaries made a discovery. They too had their weapon ; and with it they could strike such a blow for Reform as would turn the tide of battle. Someone among that little band of devoted and desperate men was a wit, with that rare gift, a Saxon tongue. Other members of the fraternity, we do not doubt, fed him with facts as to the abuses in the Church, and the oppressions of the day. But it is impossible that the seven Marprelate Tracts were the work of several hands. Martin's personality is too inimitable. His sharp, bright racy style is a thing apart

and we know nobody among the Separatist "Tractarians" who could write like that. With all due respect to Dr. Dexter, we should as soon suspect Bacon of writing Shakespeare, as Barrowe of the Marprelate Tracts. It must not be supposed that we are indifferent to their faults; only we find it difficult to understand why those who have only mild censures for the methods of Whitgift and Aylmer in the fight for Reform, should be so hypersensitive as to the freedom of Martin's speech. The Tracts teem with personalities. They could hardly do less, as they were written to show up certain definite acts of oppression. Their impertinences are grotesque. The threat to tell something worse about some great ecclesiastical personage, in the next number, unless he mends his ways, was probably little appreciated by one who knew that worse remained to tell; while at the same time it gave to the Tracts the fascination of a serial story. Their popularity was immense. The scholars at the Universities concealed them under their gowns, and laughed over them in secret Elizabeth herself, who had none too high an opinion of her bishops, procured copies, and read them, we can well believe, with mingled indignation and amusement. The Court read them, the politicians read them, the peasantry read them. The Bishops, pursuing their grim policy of persecution, found the whole land laughing at them. It was too much. Somewhere in merrie England, a depraved Puritan was still at large who had the boundless insolence, not so much to abuse the Bishops, as to mock them.

"I am called Martin Marprelatt," so his own apologia ran:—"There be many that greatly dislike of my doinges. I may have my wants, I know. For I am a man, but my course I knowe to be ordinary and lawfull. I sawe the cause of Christ's government, and of the Bishops'

anti-Christian dealing, to be hidden. The most part of men could not be gotten to read anything written in the defence of the one and against the other. I bethought mee therefore of a way whereby men might be drawne to do both, perceiving the humours of man in these times . . . to be given to mirth. I tooke that course. I might lawfully do it. I (*aye*) for jesting is lawful by circumstances even in the greatest matters. The circumstances of time, place, and persons urged me thereunto. I never profaned the Word in any jeste. Other mirth I used as a covert wherein I would bring the truth to light. The Lord being the author both of mirth and gravitie, is it not lawfull in itselfe for the trueth to use either of these wayes when the circumstances do make it lawfull?"

The latter sentences reveal the depth of Martin's purpose. He is no mere jester. He is as serious of aim as the most solemn pamphleteer. He will "bring the Truth to light"; and he will profane no sacred subject in his jesting. Surely they who had constantly made it a reproach against the Puritan school that it was so mirthless, had now got all the humour they could desire.

Martin's wit played most freely about the august persons of Whitgift of Canterbury, Aylmer of London, and Cooper of Winchester. He knew all the scandals concerning them, and they were sufficiently numerous to furnish abundant material. All England had to know that Aylmer played bowls on Sunday, and sold the timber off the church estates to enrich himself. The notorious scandal about the Bishop of Winchester's wife became public property in an even wider sense through the tracts. All instances of oppression on the part of Whitgift to the Puritans were set on record, and lost nothing in the telling. The bishops' books were quoted against the bishops themselves; especially

Aylmer's "Harborow," written before he attained a bishopric. Therein he had waxed eloquent in an appeal to all the bishops in this strain: "Come downe, you bishopps, from your thousands and content you with your hundreds, let your diet be priestlike and not princelike, &c." "I pray you, Bishop John," quoth our author saucily, "dissolve this our question to your brother Martin: if this prophesie of yours come to passe in your dayes, who shal be Bishop of London?"

Upon all the prelates, but chiefly upon these three, he rains epithets. Above all, he is anxious to prove that they "ought not to be maintained by the authoritie of the magistrate in any Christian Commonwealth." And finally he has a bargain to propose to them, the impertinent fellow that he is, that if they will encourage preaching, make only godly and fit persons preachers, publish a book of Cartwright's, punish nobody for refusing to wear Popish garments, or omitting Popish corruptions from the Prayer-book, leave off private excommunication, and molest nobody for this book, he on his side will engage "never to make any more of your knavery knowne unto the worlde!" Verily, here is blackmail levied on the whole episcopal bench by an anonymous scribbler of Puritan "libels"!

As great a feat in its way as writing the Marprelate Tracts was printing them. This was where Penry came in; he and a certain Robert Waldegrave, who had had one press confiscated and destroyed for printing Udall's Diotrephes, a celebrated Puritan pamphlet. A printing press with boxes of types is a cumbrous and clumsy thing to convey from place to place; and when we remember that the whole constabulary of the time was in motion to discover and destroy the offending instrument, we may well wonder that the conspirators enjoyed so long a period of freedom. Burghley wrote

to the Archbishop urging him " to use all privy meanes, by force of your Commission Ecclesiasticall or otherwise, to serch out the authours hereof and their complices and ye printers and ye secret dispersers of the same." We may be very sure Whitgift needed no urging. But weeks became months, and tract succeeded tract, and nobody was arrested. It was guerilla warfare. Some sheltered spot was discovered from which to deliver a " broadside," and then the " pilgrim press " found new refuge, conveyed under cover of night somewhere, anywhere, where the scent might be less hot. The mobility and resourcefulness of the agitators was amazing. From East Molesey to Fawsley in Northamptonshire, and again to Coventry, and Haseley near Warwick, and yet again to Newton Lane near Manchester, where the press was eventually seized ; backwards and forwards went the two or three who had concluded that the prize to be attained was well worth all the risks of the fight.

By the end of July, 1589, the last Martin Tract had been written and printed ; and some time in that year Penry took refuge in Scotland, where he was well received, and permitted to preach freely, and this despite a warrant from Whitgift for his seizure, and an autograph letter from Elizabeth to James of Scotland in support of her Archbishop. It was not till the end of 1592 that he came south again ; and then, with all the innocence of a Welshman, it was to make an appeal to Elizabeth herself to be allowed to preach the Gospel in Wales. We have no knowledge that the appeal was made. What we do know is that he made his way to Southwark, and attached himself to the little Free Church there, of which Francis Johnson and John Greenwood were officers. Greenwood was at liberty just at this time, and Penry heard him preach. The

shadows were closing in, however, around the devoted young enthusiast. We are able to trace his final movements while at liberty from the depositions of one John Edwardes. Edwardes' story is that Penry was captured and taken "to the constable's house"; but they could not hold him when they had him. He "escaped away on Monday night," and was concealed under the name "John Harries." Soon after Penry came to Edwardes' chamber "before he was up." He was "booted," ready for riding. Later in the same week, on the Saturday night, Edwardes walked with Penry through Newgate. Penry and his wife went to a private house to hold a service. Afterwards we know that Penry went from London to Hogsden, on to Hertfordshire, back to Ratcliffe, where the constables were too smart for him, and he was marched off to prison. His last days were nobly spent in writing letters to his wife and little girls, and to the Lord Treasurer. They are models of what a Christian's last words to his family and to the world should be. As he sat at dinner on the 29th of May, he was told he was to die at four. It was short shrift, but he had been long prepared. At St. Thomas Watering, in Southwark, he was done to death, the Sheriff under orders forbidding any farewell words to be spoken. That he was executed upon a false charge is certain; but it is not more certain than that he died for the faith of the Gospel, and that by his life and death he served two causes that he was much concerned to advance, liberty of worship and the freedom of the press.

CHAPTER V.

The Scrooby Separatists.

As Gardiner and Bonner made Protestantism, so Archbishop Whitgift made the Free Churches. Protestantism in England had been too much identified with the right of Henry VIII. to divorce his wife. The great spiritual principles involved had been obscured. In Mary's reign, however, the battle was fairly joined, and men took sides for the decision of the real issue. It is no exaggeration to say that the constancy and testimony of the Marian martyrs did more than any official acts to turn the heart of England permanently Protestant. Moreover, the persecutions did much to reveal where the real Church of Christ lay. Those who were burned were not, for the most part, in "holy orders" in the conventional sense. They were plain men and women who, by their death, taught England the value of New Testament Christianity. Mr. Froude has graphically described what happened. The persecutors "went out into the highways and hedges; they gathered up the lame, the halt and the blind; they took the weaver from his loom, the carpenter from his workshop, the husbandman from his plough; they laid hands on maidens and boys who had never heard of any other religion than that they were called on to abjure; old men tottering into the grave, and children whose lips could but just lisp the articles of their creed; and of

these they made their burnt-offerings ; with these they crowded their prisons, and when filth and famine killed them, they flung them out to rot." This is no more than the truth, and it was made plain to all that the true defenders of the faith were not popes or kings or prelates or clergy, but the Christian people—they who had proved the worth of the Gospel in their own experience. After that, one thing was inevitable. *Men and women who were prepared on occasion to die for the faith could not for long be excluded from their rightful privileges in the Church of Christ.* Everywhere the nature of "authority" was being discussed. The same temper that challenged the prelatical authority in the Church was to challenge the royal absolutism in the State. The heresies of yesterday become the orthodoxies of to-morrow ; and alike in Church and State there was to be bitter controversy and effusion of blood before two great beliefs were established, namely, that the ultimate authority in the State is not the king, nor the nobles, nor even the House of Commons, but the English people ; and that the ultimate authority in the Church is not the Pope, nor the prelates, nor even convocations and synods, but the Christian people. They who in Mary's reign claimed their privilege of defending the faith with their life-blood did much to establish the claim of their successors to the equal privilege of defending the faith by voice and vote in the councils of the Free Churches.

That this latter privilege was involved in the Protestant attitude hardly admits of doubt. The right of private judgment in religion cannot be conceded and the right of judgment and counsel in Church affairs be denied. Whitgift fought against the latter right by dungeon and rope, as Bonner had fought against the former by dungeon and stake. In doing so, both were

fighting against the future and opposing themselves to irresistible forces of progress. There was a certain shrewdness, doubtless, as well as a certain blindness about both men. The authority of the Christian people is the end of the authority of the priest. The one all sufficient bulwark against Sacerdotalism was the doctrine which thoroughgoing, logical, and consistent Protestants such as Browne, Barrowe, and Penry were advocating at their lives' peril. Whitgift knew very well that if Barrowe's Congregational faith were allowed, the whole sacerdotal fabric must totter and fall.

We have said little or nothing about Whitgift's less prominent victims. The gaols were full of them. We have a list of twenty-five imprisoned in the Fleet, in the Clink, in the Counter in the Poultry, in the Counter in Wood-street, in Newgate, in Bridewell. In 1567, twenty-six years before Barrowe and Greenwood suffered, the Sheriffs had broken up a meeting in the Plumbers' Hall, and haled fourteen or fifteen of the leaders to gaol. There is some reason for counting this community as the first duly organised Congregational Church in England. Richard Fitz was its minister, and he afterwards died in the Bridewell, of "jail-fever," as did also his deacon Bowland. The good people who composed this society spoke of themselves as "the Privye Churche in London," and have left on record their Church order, which is substantially Congregational, and founded explicitly on Christ's words, "wherever two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I." A petition to the Queen is also extant from the members of the Church. In this is recorded how Fitz and Bowland and others had died in prison; and the signatories say that if they should cease to "groan and cry unto God" "the very walls of the prisons about this city would testify God's anger

kindled against this land for such injustice and subtile persecution."

This "Privye Church" had no fixed meeting-place, for obvious reasons. The members met where they could, in private houses, both north and south of the Thames—the house in Islington where the Protestant Congregation met in Mary's reign is specially mentioned—in the fields, when summer weather favoured them, and wherever they could get secret accommodation in the winter. Yet the Church was duly organised. We read of Francis Johnson being chosen pastor, Mr. Greenwood doctor or teacher, Bowman and Lee deacons, Studley and Kniston elders. We know that they baptized children, partook of the Lord's Supper, made offerings for the poor, and had a marriage service of their own. And finally we know from a reported saying of theirs, what is abundantly confirmed in their history, that their convictions were dearer than life to them. "They seem very steadfast in their opinions," wrote the anonymous author of "The Brownist's Synagogue," and say, "rather than they will turn, they will burn." We have noted Barrowe's "Lamentable Petition" on behalf of the imprisoned Nonconformists. There is a second "complaint and supplication of the Persecuted Church," addressed to the Privy Council in April, 1592. It is prefaced by these notable words, "We profess the same faith and truth of the Gospel which Her Majesty and your Honours, the whole land, and all the Reformed Churches under heaven this day do hold and maintain; we go beyond them—being our only fault, even in the judgments of our tyrannical and most savage enemies—in the detestation of all Popery, that most fearful anti-Christian religion; and draw nearer in some points by our practice, unto Christ's holy order and institution." What follows in the petition is very pathetic. "For

the profession and maintenance" of this faith "the fore-named enemies of God detain in their hands within the prisons about London—not to speak of other gaols throughout the land—about threescore and twelve persons, men and women, young and old, lying in cold, in hunger, in dungeons, in irons." The "supplication" goes on to record that on the 3rd of April, 1592, fifty-six persons were seized, in one raid, at a meeting held in the very house where the Protestants used to assemble during Mary's reign. These persons, it is affirmed, were worshipping God and praising Him "for all His favours showed unto us"; and their prayers were for God's mercy upon "our gracious Princess and country." There was never a breath of disloyalty about these early Separatist martyrs. Whatever their faults may have been, their attitude to the civil, as distinguished from the ecclesiastical authorities, was blameless. They, then, go on to record that seventeen or eighteen have been imprisoned unto death "in the same noisome gaols within these six years." "Are we malefactors?" they exclaim. "Are we anywise undutiful to our Prince? Maintain we any errors? Let us, then, be judicially convicted thereof, and delivered to the Civil Authority. But let not these bloody men both accuse condemn, and close murder us after this sort; contrary to all law, equity and conscience; where, alone, they are the plaintiff, the accusers, the judges, and the executioners of their most fearful, barbarous tyranny." They conclude with these words, "We crave for all of us but liberty either to die openly, or to live openly in the land of our nativity."

In the year following the drafting of this moving petition, John Udall died in the Marshalsea. He had been sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to one of imprisonment. Certain merchants trading to

Turkey offered him a chaplaincy abroad, and he would gladly have gone, but the authorities refused to sanction even this method of ridding themselves of him. There was to be a shorter way out of his troubles to John Udall, and he died soon afterwards, of a broken heart, men said. He was a very learned man, the author of the famous satirical dialogue, "Diotrephes," a Puritan manifesto which was the cause of his undoing. There is a story that when James of Scotland came to England to succeed Elizabeth, he asked for Udall, and on hearing that he was dead exclaimed, "By my sol, then the greatest scholar in Europe's ded!"

After this fashion wrought John Whitgift—by the grace of God Archbishop of Canterbury—"pro ecclesia Dei." Three years later the martyr roll has received many additions. We now read of "twenty-four souls" done to death in London gaols alone "in laste yeare." Even the civil authorities were in rebellion. Sometimes it happened that Whitgift was left to sit in his persecuting Court alone, or supported only by like-minded ecclesiastics. It is only when we consider how melancholy was his delusion that indignation gives way to pity. A few here and there, broken by punishment, made formal recantation of their convictions and lied to God and man. These were his victories; his trophies "pro ecclesia Dei." He was, as Dr. Gardiner says, "narrow and ungentle by birth and education"; and he had no larger conception of what to do with a religious earnestness that was not of his fashion than to fill his gaols with it. Of all fanaticism, the fanaticism for uniformity in things ecclesiastical would seem to be the deadliest and cruellest.

After persecution, exile. In one of his latest epistles John Penry had written to his brethren thus: "Seeing banishment, with loss of goods, is likely to betide you

all, prepare yourselves for this hard entreaty." The mercy of England to these fathers of her religious freedom was to offer them perpetual banishment as an alternative to death in prison. The land they loved and prayed for, whose "Princess" figured ever in their supplications, was the one land they were never to see again. Still, the offer was of life somewhere, and life is dear to men who have a God to serve and an ideal to pursue. They had that to live for which made life worth living. So the State emptied its dungeons into its ships, and flung out scores of its best citizens as refuse on the shores of Holland. They must have landed as "pauper aliens," in the very depths of poverty. There was a miserable pittance, sacred in their eyes, yielded by a little legacy left by Henry Barrowe. It appears, too, that some grant in aid was given to them by the magistrates at Naarden and Amsterdam; and a few contributions reached them from London and Middelburg. But there must have been many a desperate shift merely to keep body and soul together. We know that George Johnson "many weeks had not above sixpence or eightpence the week to live upon," and Henry Ainsworth lived on "ninepence a week and some boiled roots." No country receives such immigrants with open arms. They had been miserably thrust out of England: they were less than welcome in Holland. How they existed at all Heaven only knows. The hardships of freedom seemed likely to exceed the hardships of their bondage; and we could forgive some of them if they had even looked back regretfully to such "fleshpots" as the Fleet provided. Even Penry could not have foreseen how "hard" the "entreaty" was to be for which he would have them prepare themselves.

Exodus had always had its place in the possible

programme of the Puritans. Cartwright took refuge in Middelburg; Robert Browne sought an asylum in the same town. 'Neither Flanders nor Holland had much in the way of worldly prospects to offer; but to those who were prepared to count all things but loss that they might fulfil the will of Christ, they were veritable havens of refuge. How many English Separatists crossed over to the Low Countries during the next few years we have no exact knowledge. The leaders of the movement passed out of English life; and if the question be asked what of the many thousands who were undoubtedly touched by the principles of Separatism in the early days, our reply must be that their faith remained but as a deep undercurrent in English religious life, waiting only the occasion to flow upward again with force of passionate conviction. This "flowing under" of Puritan faith and feeling is a phenomenon that we have seen repeated more than once in English history. So still, silent and invisible has Puritan life become at times that its antagonists have presumed on the fact; but at some supreme call the old spirit has awaked from the grave, and has borne down all opposition before it. The work of the Separatist preachers and pamphleteers was not lost. A day was coming which would declare it.

It is no business of ours to follow the exiled Church to the Continent. By their dissensions, alas, they gave the enemy everywhere cause to blaspheme. Into the long-protracted quarrel between Francis Johnson, the pastor, and his brother George, concerning the rings, lace, &c., which brother Francis's wife would insist on wearing we need not enter. There were worthier subjects of dispute. John Smyth separated from the original church on the question of baptism. He carried with him Thomas Helwisse, and they taught the doctrine

of "self-baptism." Later on, Smyth abjured this doctrine, and joined the Mennonite Church, whose practise of baptism satisfied him. Helwisse, on the other hand, stood by the old position of self-baptism. These divisions resulted in a pamphlet warfare which was not altogether to edification. One thing, however, must be said. Al that we possess of the writings of these men acquaints us with their undeniable ability. They were men of powerful minds and remarkable learning, according to the standard of the times. Johnson and Ainsworth and Smyth and Helwisse would have lent distinction to any community. But it is necessary to return to England, and mark such development as there was of the Separatist movement here.

In the year 1603 Queen Elizabeth died, indicating as she lay speechless that James of Scotland was to succeed her. Elizabeth's despotism had been exercised over all her subjects. The highest dignitaries in the land were her puppets. She was a despot to her prelates and to her statesmen and to her soldiers and sailors. But at least it cannot be said of her reign that it was a despotism with no strong character behind it. With all her faults she remained a high-spirited English woman; and in her obstinacy and prejudice and hatred of extremes she was a true representative of the people she ruled. Into the absolutism the Tudors had created James Stuart entered. For years he had been vainly striving north of the border for that very plenitude of power which Elizabeth enjoyed in England. While Elizabeth was tuning her pulpits, and getting her prelates well in hand, the independent presbyters of the North did not fail to remind James of his duty. What would have happened in England if any Andrew Melville had been found to tell Elizabeth that in the Kingdom of God she was only "God's sillie vassal,"

the imagination fails to conceive. James was easily persuaded of the truth of the maxim "no bishop, no king." He felt he had been no king where presbytery ruled; but in his new realm the authority of the bishop guaranteed the absolutism of the monarch. He had probably little notion how largely the heart of England was already Puritan. As Mr. J. R. Green says: "During the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament, England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." Preachers by the hundred had been suspended and silenced; but the effect of their preaching endured. The temper of the laity was increasingly Puritan. There were signs of the times which James might have discerned to his profit had he had eyes to see. Eight hundred of the clergy presented to him, at his accession, the famous Millenary Petition, calling upon him to reform the ecclesiastical courts, remove the superstitious usages sanctioned in the Prayer Book, encourage a more rigid observance of Sundays, and provide more trained preachers. James's reply to the petition was the Hampton Court Conference, in which he applauded the bishops for their abuse of the Puritans, and finally declared of the latter, "I will make them conform, or I will harry them out of the land." With these ominous words "the wisest fool in Christendom" undertook the government of the English people, and apparently there was nobody in his confidence to teach him better, except the bishops, who solemnly assured him that he had spoken under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

The Hampton Court Conference was John Whitgift's last great public appearance. A month later, he was dead. It is said that as he lay well-nigh insensible he was heard to mutter "pro ecclesia Dei." It was the

apology for his life-policy. But there is little doubt that he felt that the "ecclesia Dei" in England had fallen on evil days. He had said more than once that he hoped he should not be spared to see another Parliament. He knew perfectly well that the temper of England was against him. The "forty-pound freeholders" who sent their representatives to Parliament were for the most part genuine Protestants and Church Reformers. The old Archbishop foreboded trouble and knew the quarter out of which the tempest would presently break. What he could do for continuity of spirit and policy he did do. He had trained Bancroft, promoted him, and indicated him as his successor. Bancroft was like-minded with himself, sharing the same singular illusion that generosity is weakness. In the growing impatience of the party of Reform, this succession augured ill for the peace of the Church and the Kingdom.

Possibly the Puritan Party may have entertained hopes of better days when the last of the Tudors had passed away. It was one of the strange "revenges" of the "whirligig of time" that the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, should sit in Elizabeth's seat and grasp her sceptre. Elizabeth valued episcopacy as a mere instrument of government. She had no genuine Protestantism in her, unless defiance of the Pope's authority in her English dominions, be accounted such. She thought that system of Church rule the best which required the most absolute submission and obedience. James Stuart had grown up under a Church system which conferred upon its members a mental franchise. He had learned by painful experience that freedom of speech and action might have actual existence within a realm; and if he himself had had a taste for theological subtleties cultivated in him, he had lost none of the vanity and love

of power which was his inheritance from his mother. He came confidently to enter into Elizabeth's prestige and ideals. But he forgot that the Tudor spell was broken; and as yet there was no magic about the Stuart name with which to conjure loyalty from disaffection and discontent.

The Puritans may surely be forgiven if they remembered in his favour that he had twice solemnly subscribed the Covenant. Moreover, in the General Assembly at Edinburgh in 1590, "Standing with his bonnet off and his hands lifted up to heaven," "he praised God that he was born in the time of the light of the Gospel, and in such a place as to be king of such a Church, the sincerest Kirk in the world." "I charge you," he said, in conclusion, "my good ministers, doctors, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort the people to do the same; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life, shall maintain the same." The Puritans could not be expected to know that this was royal acting; a mere fashion of speech with no serious meaning. They looked for better things from a king's oath. It cannot be said that they were permitted to harbour for long any illusions as to James's honour. A few days sufficed to acquaint them with that fatal vice in him which was the secret of all the misery which England was to owe to the Stuarts. He was incurably false. The man who had affirmed before God that the Scotch Church was the purest in the world, which he would maintain so long as life lasted, was declaring at Hampton Court that "Scots Presbytery agrees with monarchy as well as God and the devil." After that it was left for Bancroft to exclaim that his heart melted for joy because "Almighty God, of His singular mercy, has given us such a king, as since Christ's time has not been."

The Commonwealth of America has good reason for thankfulness for the spirit and policy of James. Even as in the first century, through the cruelty of the oppressor, Christianity had free course and was glorified in many lands to which the persecuted Christians fled, so was it to be now in the case of the English Separatists. In endeavouring to rid his own realms of them James founded a new Commonwealth to be the splendid vindication of their principles. This is the story that lies before us now. To-day it is easily told; yet no more than fifty years ago the main outlines of it were all unknown. It was known, indeed, that the Church at Leyden, of which John Robinson was minister, the members of which crossed the Atlantic in the *Mayflower* to become the fathers and founders of New England, had come originally out of old England. But where and when and how was unknown, until the Rev. Joseph Hunter published his "Collections concerning the early history of the founders of New Plymouth" in 1849. Since then the Rev. Dr. John Brown, of Bedford, has written the history of "The Pilgrim Church" with a fidelity and sympathy that leave nothing to be desired. Up to this time we have heard little or nothing of English Separatism apart from London and the Eastern and Southern counties. The movement that had such majestic issue as the foundation of a new Commonwealth across the Atlantic was a North-country movement. The famous first Governor of that new colony, William Bradford, left behind him a most interesting record of the struggles and sufferings and successes of the now historic community that was successively transplanted from England to Amsterdam, from Amsterdam to Leyden, from Leyden to America. His description, however, of their first home did not contain the actual mention of Scrooby. He said the

SCROOBY MANOR HOUSE.

members of the Church "were of several towns and villages, some in Nottinghamshire, some in Lincolnshire, and some in Yorkshire, where they bordered nearest together"; also that "they ordinarily met at William Brewster's house on the Lord's Day, which was a manor of the Bishop's." Here was an interesting riddle for the local historian and antiquarian. One by one the facts were dragged to light, and the result is the addition of Scrooby Manor House to the shrines at which the friends of religious liberty all the world over do worship.

Scrooby Manor House has other interesting associations. Here Cardinal Wolsey resided at the time of the wreck of his fortunes, and his disgrace at the hands of the King he had served so long. But all other associations pale before the one supreme memory that here with Brewster for elder, John Robinson for teacher, and Richard Clyfton for pastor, the Congregational Church was organised for work and worship whose members afterwards "planted their idea in virgin soil" by founding a colony of men and women whose prime ambition was "not to seek gold but God."

It must have been in the year preceding the accession of James I. that a Separatist community was formed in the town of Gainsborough. We may find the origins of this movement in the vigorous Protestantism of several Puritan preachers around. Dr. Brown also reminds us that the lord of the manor at Gainsborough had Puritan sympathies, and was not likely to molest or discourage these pioneers. The first pastor of the Gainsborough church was the John Smyth we have met with before as embracing Baptist opinions in Amsterdam at a later period of his ministry. He was a Cambridge graduate, a very lovable personality, whose last published work, written in prospect of that "all-reconciling

world where Luther and Zuinglius are well agreed," was designed to promote harmony and union among Christian people. For three or four years William Brewster and William Bradford and other kindred souls travelled on the Sunday some ten or twelve miles from Scrooby and Austerfield to Gainsborough to worship with John Smyth's congregation. But a little before Smyth was exiled to Holland, there was a friendly arrangement by which a new community of Separatists was formed, with the Scrooby Manor House as their place of worship. There William Brewster "entertained them when they came, making provision for them to his great charge." He was a remarkable man, acting at this time as "post-master" on the great North Road. But he had seen a very different side of life, having lived at Court in Elizabeth's day serving "that religious and godly gentleman William Davison divers years when he was Secretary of State." This was the Secretary Davison in whose presence Elizabeth signed the warrant for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots; and when she afterwards desired to evade responsibility it suited her purpose to accuse her Secretary of exceeding his instructions. Davison was disgraced, one of his last petitions being that Brewster might be appointed postmaster of Scrooby. William Bradford lived at Austerfield, and was left an orphan in early life, but with "a comfortable inheritance." He was by twenty-three years the junior of Brewster, and occupied a good social position in the countryside. Richard Clyfton, the pastor of the Scrooby Church had been rector of the neighbouring village of Babworth. When obedience to the canons of the Church of England was rigorously enforced by Bancroft, he was probably deprived of his living, and became pastor of the Scrooby Church. Bradford's tribute to him is worthy of record:

"He was a grave and fatherly old man when he came first into Holland, having a great white beard; and pity it is that such a reverend old man should be forced to leave his country, and at those years to go into exile. But it was his lot and he bore it patiently. Much good had he done in the country where he lived, and converted many to God by his faithful and painful ministry, both in preaching and catechising."

A more renowned name than that of Richard Clyfton is that of John Robinson, who was pastor of a Congregational Church in Norwich before he was compelled by stress of persecution to seek refuge in the North. Among all the founders of modern Congregationalism there is none nobler than Robinson, a man the strength of whose intellect was only equalled by the breadth of his sympathies. He was a true Catholic, the spiritual father of the Independency that vindicated the principle of toleration in Church and State. Much as he had suffered at the hands of the Church of England, and firmly as he dissented from her polity, he did not scruple to acknowledge freely the Christian faith and piety of multitudes of her children; and he rejoiced in the sense of spiritual brotherhood with them. The keenest sorrow of the men of the *Mayflower* was that Robinson must remain behind to minister to those who had decided against emigration; and Robinson's heart was always with the pioneers whose new home he was never to see.

Such were some of the leading men who entered into Christian association in that historic Congregational Church at Scrooby Manor House. They would have claimed that the Church they founded was of the apostolic pattern: it was certainly officered by apostolic men. The cause that had such servants might be numerically weak, yet it had the best of all guarantees

of success in the character and capacity of its defenders. Had James Stuart had at his service a few minds as wise and hearts as brave as these, he had been in better case.

It was impossible that men of such mark as the Scrooby Separatists would be left in peace. Bradford tells us that they "were hunted and persecuted on every side. Some were taken and clapt up in prison, others had their houses beset and watcht night and day . . . and the most were fain to fly and leave their houses and habitations and the means of their livelihood." They were yet to discover that even this latter cruel alternative was not open to them. They were neither allowed to live in peace at home, nor seek peace abroad. It was apparently in the autumn of 1607 that the first attempt at emigration was made by the Scrooby community as a whole. Several attempts had been previously made to escape by twos and threes, but the King's officers had frustrated them—the would-be pilgrims had suffered in person and property for their audacity. This time, however, a ship had been hired to accommodate all the company. The quaint old town of Boston in Lincolnshire was to be the place of departure; and all the particulars of embarkation had been satisfactorily arranged. *All* that is to say save one—the integrity of the captain of the vessel. This perjured scoundrel played them false; converted his ship into a Government trap, and when all were safely on board handed them over to the law officers. The attentions of these latter were not of a scrupulous order, even to the women. "Rifled and stripped of their money, books, and much other goods," these distressed and persecuted men and women were then haled before the magistrates, and subsequently crowded into the cells of Boston prison. The magistrates, however,

showed them what consideration they could, and finally the main body of intending emigrants was sent back to Scrooby, seven of the leaders, among whom was Brewster, being kept in prison.

Despite this rebuff, there was no faltering in their purpose. In the following spring another concerted attempt was made to get away to the Low Countries. This time a bargain was struck with a Dutch captain, and it was determined to set sail from the neighbourhood of Hull. On arrival at the rendezvous there was prolonged waiting in stormy weather on that exposed coast. At last the Dutch vessel arrived. A boat-load of men had been taken on board, when suddenly "a great company, both horse and foot, with bills and guns and other weapons" was seen bearing down upon them. "The country was raised to take them." The captain of the vessel hoisted sail, and hove away to the north-east, with the luckless men whose wives, children and possessions were all in the hands of the soldiers. The storm broke over the North Sea in fury. For fourteen days those on board lived in almost hourly expectation of death. The little boat was driven away north towards the Norwegian coast. But the good hand of God was over them, and after many sufferings they made the appointed harbour, and this first forlorn remnant of the pilgrim community had, though in such evil case, reached their desired haven. Of those left behind some few escaped the soldiers, but most of the men with the women and children fell once again into the hands of their enemies. In this case, however, their very helplessness was their protection, and it seems that the authorities were embarrassed at finding such a burden on their hands. It might be as well to let them have their way and so rid the country of them and of their notions. Some in one ship and some in another,

they were sent across to Holland. John Robinson, William Brewster, and Richard Clyfton "were of the last, and stayed to help the weakest over before them." The exodus must have lasted many months, and the emigrants must have landed in many places. But by twos and threes they continued to arrive in the city of Amsterdam, travel-stained and with much to tell of perils by the way, but unbroken in faith and fortitude. Here they were to sojourn for awhile, until the hand of destiny led them on to Leyden, and from Leyden to New England. The reason for the removal of the Scrooby Church from Amsterdam to Leyden lay principally in the spirit of disputation and division which had come to prevail among the Amsterdam Separatists. The controversy as to the mode of Mrs. Francis Johnson's attire must have seemed intolerably petty and puerile to men like Robinson, Brewster, and Bradford. Moreover Johnson and Ainsworth had come to incline towards government by presbyters; and in vesting all power in the elders practically to disfranchise the Church. At least this was Robinson's opinion, though old Richard Clyfton did not agree with him, and in consequence was not found among those who moved on to Leyden. John Smyth, too, the old neighbour and friend of Brewster and Bradford, when he ministered at Gainsborough, had begun to teach Baptist opinions. Robinson and his friends had not come away from the fierce religious controversies of England to quarrel with their brethren abroad. It was in every way better that they should establish themselves elsewhere; and the consent of the Leyden authorities being freely given, they made a settlement in that city in 1609. The story of the Leyden Church is outside the scope of this history, but it is one that every Free Churchman may read with joy and pride. Testimonies

abound to the harmony and unity that prevailed. "That which was a crown unto them," writes Bradford, "they lived together in love and peace all their days without any considerable difference or any disturbance that grew thereby but such as was easily healed in love, and so they continued until with mutual consent they removed into New England." Worthy of remark was the attraction which this Christian community exercised over the mind of a young English gentleman on his travels—Edward Winslow. He felt that here was what he had never hoped to see, a Church of apostolic pattern and spirit. He determined to throw in his lot with it; and when the *Mayflower* sailed, he sailed with the rest. His written verdict on the Leyden Church is this: "I persuade myself never people on earth lived more lovingly together and parted more sweetly than we the Church at Leyden did."

John Robinson, the teacher and pastor of the Church, has left behind him voluminous writings. There are some sixty-two non-controversial essays; and in addition there are numerous controversial tracts, all of which are distinguished by his lofty spirit of Christian magnanimity. When we consider how the controversial literature of the time was disfigured by gross personalities and abusive epithets, we are especially struck by the freedom of John Robinson's pages from all that is offensive. Vigorous without being uncharitable, and firm without being bigoted, he is the Galahad of these theological and ecclesiastical tourneys. His spirit pervaded the community to which he ministered; and he trained men broad of mind and large of heart who when the hour came could draw up the famous covenant of the *Mayflower*—"the first instrument conferring equal civil and religious rights on every member of the Commonwealth."

Little wonder that under such a minister the Leyden church throve and prospered. Yet the conditions of life were hard and did not promise to become easier. A renewal of the war with Spain was possible, and in that event Leyden must be one of the first cities to be attacked. Moreover, the persecuting hand of James continued to reach even to Holland, as Brewster, printer of books, had cause to discover. All these reasons, and many others, caused the Church to turn its eyes westward, and to hearken to the rumours that reached it of a great land beyond the ocean. Many circumstances combined to make the "pilgrim fathers" ideal colonists and pioneers. Some of these are set forth in the noble document forwarded to London to induce the English authorities to consent to the enterprise. "We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and enured to difficulties of a strange and hard land which yet in a great part we have by patience overcome." "We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation, whereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves straitly tied to all care of each other's good, and of the whole by every one and so mutually." "It is not with us as with other men whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again." The negotiations were long and troublesome. The Separatists did not receive all the assurances as to religious liberty that they wished; but they considered they had sufficient guarantee that if they made the adventure they would not be molested. The issue we all know. A minority of the Leyden Church decided for emigration; the youngest and strongest were to face the early hardship of settlement and so prepare the way for others to follow. In his last sermon to them

John Robinson charged them that if God should reveal anything to them by any other instrument of His they should be as ready to receive it as ever they were to receive any truth by his ministry. "For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light to break forth out of His holy Word." He also advised them "to study union rather than division." There was much prayer, and fasting and psalm-singing. "It was the sweetest melody," says Winslow, "that ever mine ears heard." The final parting with their brethren took place at Delfshaven. They "were not able to speak to one another for the abundance of sorrow to part." "Truly doleful was the sight of that sad and mournful parting." Even "Dutch strangers on the quay" "could not refrain from tears." A parting volley from the muskets of those on board and the *Speedwell* hoisted sail for Southampton. This was on July 22, 1620. Arriving there, the *Mayflower* was waiting for them with some from England who were to join in the enterprise; but there were tedious delays on account of alterations having been made in the articles of agreement. When the two vessels did actually sail and had got some three hundred miles beyond Land's End, the *Speedwell* sprung a leak, or, as Dr. Ray Palmer suggests, "the courage of the captain sprung a leak." Back they had to go to Plymouth. Then such of the *Speedwell's* passengers as would go on were transferred to the *Mayflower*, and the crowded little vessel turned her bows towards the Atlantic. Halfway across they encountered terrific seas. One of the main beams of the little ship was twisted out of its place. Some were for turning back even then, so desperate did the adventure appear, but the great majority were for battling on; and nine weeks after leaving Plymouth Harbour they had their reward when they saw the eastern side

of the shore of Cape Cod. Eventually the 102 settlers were landed at Plymouth Bay in New England, and a new era in the world's history opened. We conclude this part of our story in the words of an American writer of to-day: "Their descendants, direct and collateral, may number a million. They are found in all the states of the Union and among Christians of every name. By them the heroic Pilgrim ancestors have been transfigured, their story has been embalmed in art and poetry, and kept alive in monuments and in celebrations. Descent from a Pilgrim Father or mother is like a patent of nobility. New England societies, Congregational clubs, and churches of many names from Sandy Hook to the Golden Gate annually recount their merits and retell the old story. In all lands where the English tongue is sweet to the ear their name is honoured. . . . Their fame has gone throughout the world, and their glorious testimony to the ends of the earth."

CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of Archbishop Laud.

In tracing the fortunes of the Scrooby Congregationalists we have ignored certain notable events in the Free Church movement in England to which we must now return. In the year 1611 Archbishop Bancroft died. His successor who was to link the primacy of Bancroft to the primacy of Laud was a somewhat severe type of the Puritan Anglican—Archbishop Abbot. He had been a tool in the hands of James to incline the stubborn Calvinists of Scotland to bear the mild yoke of a modified episcopacy. Laud, with whom he had already quarrelled more than once, had not yet risen to influence, and Abbot had the primacy as the reward for his Scotch services especially. Possibly the rumour of his Puritan sympathies stirred new hope in the breasts of the Separatist exiles. John Smyth the Baptist was dead; but his successor, Thomas Helwisse, with a small but faithful following, returned immediately on the preferment of Abbot and settled in London. This must have constituted the first General Baptist Church in England, though its meeting-place is quite unknown. Small and obscure, however, as it undoubtedly was, there belongs to it a title to distinguished honour and deathless fame. In the words of Professor Masson: "Not to the Church of England, nor to Scottish Presbyterianism, nor to English Puritanism at large does the

honour of *the first perception of the full principle of liberty of conscience and its first assertion in English speech* belong. That honour has to be assigned, I believe, to the Independents generally, and to the Baptists in particular." While in Amsterdam John Smyth's congregation had put forth a confession of faith in which these words occur: "The magistrate is not to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, nor compel men to this or that form of religion; because Christ is the King and Lawgiver of the Church and conscience." Robert Browne may probably have gone so far as this, though there is nothing quite so decisive in his pamphlets; and his successors had not been as consistent as Browne. With the arrival of Thomas Helwisse's poor handful of Anglo-Dutch Anabaptists in London the principle of liberty of conscience was first fairly planted on English soil.

There was a certain "Leonard Busher, citizen of London," a member of Helwisse's congregation, who in 1614 published a little tract entitled "Religious Peace: or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience." He was a poor, labouring man, but his tract was "the earliest known English publication in which full liberty of conscience is openly advocated." Its contention is in brief that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world, and that the sword of His kingdom is the sword of the Spirit. "As kings and bishops cannot command the wind so they cannot command faith. . . . You may force men to Church against their consciences, but they will believe as they did before they came there." This simple tract was followed by another, written this time by John Murton, Helwisse's assistant. It was in the form of a dialogue and was to prove "by the law of God, by the law of our land, and by His Majesty's many testimonies that no

man ought to be persecuted for his religion, so he testifie his allegiance by the oath appointed by law." A Church that could bear this testimony might be numerically and socially insignificant, but it was sowing seed that would have majestic harvest.

In 1616 another Continental Community of Separatists returned to England. This was the Church at Middleburg, of which Mr. Henry Jacob was pastor. Jacob had been converted to Independency by John Robinson, and consequently may be said to have represented the Robinsonian tradition. Neither he, nor his followers, were prepared to go the full length of Helwisse's Baptist Society in the advocacy of toleration; but the fact remained that they had adopted a principle of Church life which must eventually have for its full development the belief in liberty of conscience. The foundation of Henry Jacob's church was after this fashion. "Standing together, they joined hands, and solemnly covenanted with each other in the presence of Almighty God to walk together in God's ways and ordinances according as He had already revealed, or should further make known to them." After this Mr. Jacob was elected pastor by "the suffrage of the brotherhood," "and proper persons were appointed to the office of deacons with fasting and prayer and imposition of hands." It may be recorded here that after eight years of ministry in London, Mr. Jacob emigrated to America. He was succeeded by John Lathrop, "a man of learning, and of a meek and quiet spirit." These qualities, however, did not save him from Archbishop Laud. He, and some forty-two members were seized in a house in Blackfriars in 1632, and thrown into prison. Their sufferings did not break the unity, nor dash the spirit of the Church. "So steady were they to their vows that hardly an instance can be produced of one that

deserted the Church under the severest persecutions." Mr. Lathrop himself, like so many others of his brethren, found refuge in New England. He was succeeded in the pastorate of his London congregation by Henry Jessey, M.A., of whose noble character and devoted labours we shall have more to say hereafter.

The period of the return of the Independents from the Continent was marked by more important ecclesiastical events than the death of Bancroft. There was the issue of our Authorised Version of the Bible in this same year, 1611. A competent body of translators had been engaged on the task for three years, and the result of their labours was to give an enormous impetus to the circulation and study of the Bible; and this in its turn has always tended to promote Protestant and Puritan opinions. Speaking of the translators, old Thomas Fuller makes use of one of his quaint and happy images. "These, with Jacob, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well of life; so that now, even Rachels, weak women, may freely come both to drink themselves, and water the flocks of their families at the same." It is shocking to every right-feeling Protestant to-day, to learn that the publication of a new translation of the Bible was followed by a revival of persecution in its most horrible form. There was an Essex man named Bartholomew Legate, who had embraced Arian opinions, who in this very year was brought out of prison and burned at Smithfield. Fuller says that his person was comely, his complexion black, and his age about forty years, "of a bold spirit, confident carriage, fluent tongue, excellently skilled in Scriptures . . . his conversation (for ought I can learn to the contrary) very unblamable." His somewhat remarkable belief is said to have been "that Christ was not God from everlasting, but began to be God when He took flesh

of the Virgin Mary." He had already endured much imprisonment in Newgate when he was put on trial for his life, condemned as "an obdurate, contumacious, and incorrigible heretic," and finally burned at Smithfield before a "vast conflux" of people. Neither was Legate to suffer alone. In the following month Edward Wightman, of Burton-on-Trent, was burned at Lichfield. Fuller will have it that the number of Wightman's heresies was not less than ten, and that he consequently exceeded Mary Magdalene in the devils by which he was possessed. His heresies were those of "Ebion, Cerinthus, Valentinian, Arius, Macedonius, Simon Magus, Manes, Manichæus, Photinus, and of the Anabaptists." "Lord, what are we when God leaves us?" demands the orthodox Fuller. It would appear, however, that although Fuller had convinced himself that God was "well-pleased with this seasonable severity," inasmuch as no further burnt-offerings were made on the altar of orthodoxy, yet the authorities desisted for more politic reasons. Such people as were "unable to distinguish between *constancy* and *obstinacy* were ready to entertain good thoughts even of the opinions of those Heretics who sealed them so manfully with their blood." In other words, James and his bishops were doing their best to excite sympathy for Arian opinions; and had the shrewdness to perceive their mistake. "Wherefore," adds Fuller, with possibly a touch of irony, "King James politically preferred that Heretics hereafter, though condemned, should silently and privately waste themselves away in the prison." This was the less romantic and more cruel destiny reserved for so many conscientious Nonconformists of every variety of opinion.

John Milton, in his "Areopagitica," has a passage descriptive of his visit to Italy in which this striking

reference occurs: "I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought. And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the prelatical yoke, nevertheless I took it as a pledge of future happiness that other nations were so persuaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that those Worthies were then breathing in her air who should be her leaders to such a deliverance as shall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish." The "Worthies" who were to deliver England from a despotism as cruel and as foolish as that under which Galileo was suffering, were indeed breathing our English air, though as yet they were as unknown to the land at large as Leonard Busher or John Murton. In 1620 Oliver Cromwell came of age; and we may suppose that even the joys of matrimony which he experienced in the same year did not altogether withdraw his sympathies from the public interest. His cousin, John Hampden, entered the House of Commons in the following year, and began that career of devotion to the cause of liberty and justice which ended on Chalgrove Field. Pym, the great Parliamentarian, had already been seven years in Parliament when Hampden joined him; and his resolute attitude had caused James to term him "a very ill-tempered spirit." Sir John Eliot shared with Pym the compliment of James's distrust and indignation, though he did not sit in Parliament until 1623, only two years before James died. As for Milton himself, he was but twelve years old in 1620, yet he belonged by Divine election to "those Worthies" who were to be "leaders" in the great "deliverance" of England. We cannot fail to note, on the other hand, the rise of the man who

ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

(*From an old Engraving.*)

was to be the most formidable adversary of those we have just enumerated. In 1621 William Laud was preferred to the Bishopric of St. David's. It was on this occasion that James I. uttered one of his shrewd sayings, "And is there no woe but you will carry it? Then take him to you, but on my soul you will repent it." Laud was so great a figure in the life of his time, and his work has been of such significance in English Church history since then, that a brief account of his early career is necessary.

The son of a Reading clothier, he became first a scholar, and subsequently a fellow at Oxford University. It was at Oxford that he first came into conflict with Abbot, who was at that time Vice-Chancellor of the University. Laud maintained "the necessity of baptism as the vehicle of regeneration, and the necessity of the episcopate to the existence of a true Church." This wholesale classification of all unbaptized persons as unregenerate, and this unchurching of all churches not episcopally constituted, was typical of Laud's narrow intensity of creed. James I., who knew well the dangerous elements in Laud, had himself all the zeal of a new convert for episcopacy, and showed much Court favour to this uncompromising champion of it. Nevertheless, Laud was nearing his fiftieth year before he was promoted to his first bishopric. It was at St. David's that he gave practical expression to his theories. Interpreting his favourite phrase, "the beauty of holiness," to mean order and ceremonial in the Church, he set himself to restore most of the ecclesiastical arrangements which had been abolished by ordinance or statute since the Reformation. The Communion-table became once again the altar; and this was the change from which a multitude of minor changes flowed, containing as it did the sacrificial theory on which the existence of a sacer-

dotal ministry depends. It is interesting to note also that Laud's admiration for Rome was the measure of his dislike of Geneva. Nobody more openly attacked the Calvinistic articles of the Church of England to which he had solemnly engaged his belief. He forbade his clergy to preach on Predestination and Election. The more liberal theology, however, which he professed, had no liberalising effect upon his ecclesiastical theories. While the extreme Independent Calvinists were publicly advocating the largest measure of toleration, Laud and his Anglo-Catholic Arminians were all for resorting to the sternest methods of dealing with recusants. We have no reason to suppose that Laud was naturally cruel; he was made cruel by his creed. He believed honestly that it is worth while to torture a man into orthodoxy and conformity for the sake of his soul's salvation, and that a Nonconformist saint was a greater danger to society than a Conformist rogue. He was a man of almost sublime intrepedity, a noble benefactor of learning, especially at Oxford, and a devoted servant of the Church as he understood it. His diaries show us a naïve superstition mingling with a strain of genuine piety. In his private life he was simple and unostentatious. These admirable qualities serve the more to convince us of the viciousness of the theories which in dealing with ecclesiastical antagonists could render him so passionate, implacable, and cruel.

Arbitrary power in Church and State had formed a confederation to resist and destroy popular rights and privileges. James was forcing the episcopacy on Scotland, and verging nearer and nearer to the Roman Catholic polity in England. The most powerful members of the episcopate were for strengthening the King's prerogative and defending his usurpation of despotic powers. The Free Church movement at this

stage becomes less sectarian than national, less theological than political. The invasion of hard-won and historic Parliamentary and popular privileges was so gross that patriotism became more and more identified with resistance to arbitrary rule in bishops and in King. All those laws and rules which pressed most hardly on the Puritan party in Church and State were rigorously enforced; whereas in the agreement with Spain that was to facilitate the marriage of Charles, Prince of Wales, with the daughter of the Spanish King, private assurances were given that the laws would not be enforced against the Catholics. Archbishop Abbot protested against this toleration; but he was no longer of much influence, and an accidental circumstance gave Laud the advantage over Abbot which he so ardently desired. The Archbishop, when out hunting, had the misfortune to shoot one of the keepers, who died from the wound. In consequence his Grace retired from the Council Board, and, indeed, was never afterwards an effective occupant of his high position. The silencing and deprivation of Puritan ministers went on merrily after this; and it is not too much to say that in every parish where such an injustice happened the result was a plentiful crop of convictions hostile to Court and Church—convictions that were a power to be reckoned with when the struggle for popular liberty came to the final issue.

In 1625 King James I. died. It is doubtful whether his death was regretted in any quarter of his dominions. First King of the United Kingdom, none had a fairer opportunity, and none could well have used it more unwisely. Personal ambition converted him into the narrowest of partisans. Accepting the hierarchical system as embodying an English ideal he mistook the character of his English subjects and forfeited the

confidence and loyalty of the land of his nativity. Of his personal deficiencies, his coarseness of speech, his indolence, his falseness, his utter lack of great qualities of generosity and magnanimity, there is no need to speak. On the whole, the judgment of Bishop Burnet may suffice for the epitaph—" the scorn of the age, a mere pedant, without true judgment, courage, or steadiness, his reign being a continued course of mean practices." Nevertheless, the famous Bishop Williams proved, in an elaborate funeral discourse, that his late Majesty had ten singular resemblances to King Solomon, and his sermon was felt to be, if not a convincing tribute to James, at least a striking demonstration of what Fuller calls " the art and ingenuity " of the preacher.

There is ample evidence that the succession of Charles I. to the throne was everywhere regarded with hope. All that was known of him was to his advantage. He was grave and serious in deportment, and his reserved manner was not taken amiss by those who knew how far the opposite defect had carried his father. That he was scrupulously chaste and devout in his personal and private life was another fact that counted in his favour with his Puritan subjects. The Spanish marriage was off by this time, and although the marriage of the King with Henrietta Maria of France meant the strengthening of the Roman influence in the Court, there was nothing like the general opposition to this alliance that had been manifested to the proposed Spanish match. If Charles could have brought himself to trust his subjects, and be open with his Parliament, all might have gone well. He had inherited a legacy of foolish entanglements and still more foolish engagements in regard to the European nations. No one was disposed to hold him personally responsible, and the fatuous policy of James might easily have been exchanged for a straightforward

and consistent policy that Charles could have pursued with dignity and advantage. This, however, was not the prudent course that commended itself to the Duke of Buckingham, the brilliant young favourite and confidant of the King, who supplied, in his dashing courage, his gaiety, his overweening confidence in himself and his ideas, all the qualities that were most lacking in Charles. It was Buckingham's policy to take advantage of the enthusiasm for the young King to obtain a huge vote of money for prosecuting various adventures against foreign Powers. Nothing, however, was to be told Parliament of the uses to which this sum of money was to be applied. Enough that the King asked for it, and might be trusted to spend it to advance the glory of Britain.

Parliament was in no humour to take such a leap in the dark. The voice that asked the money was the voice of Charles, but the hand was the hand of Buckingham. It was more than suspected that some of the subsidy was to find its way into the coffers of the French King, to enable him to crush his Huguenot subjects, who were being besieged at Rochelle. A hundred and one rumours were abroad. It was the time for a little frank confidence from those who proposed to spend the money to those who were required to vote it; yet no declaration of policy was made. The Commons gradually stiffened their backs. They had had a number of explicit assurances that Charles's marriage did not mean the encouragement of Romanism in the realm. Charles had all the Stuart genius for promises, and made no difficulty about denying to the Parliament the pledges he had given to France on the occasion of the marriage-treaty. He was now committed to two irreconcilable sets of engagements. He might break both; but he could not keep both. Parliament soon saw that it

was being trifled with. Under the spirited leadership of Phelips and Sir John Eliot, the latter of whom had been high in the graces of Buckingham, but who was not the man to sacrifice his independency or stifle his convictions to curry favour with any man, the House of Commons voted only a moiety of the supplies demanded, and this "in respect of the affection to the King, not for satisfaction to his business!" So little pliant to the royal will was the Parliament that it was adjourned for a few months, to meet again at Oxford. In the meantime to fulfil Charles' engagements with the French Court, numbers of Catholic priests were released from confinement, and several English ships were made over to the French Government, their crews refusing to serve lest they should be ordered to attack the Huguenots at Rochelle. All this gave rise to fresh disturbances of the public feeling. The first question raised in Parliament concerned the action of the King in breaking his word to the Commons in regard to the Catholics. "I cannot believe," exclaimed Eliot, "he gave his pardon to a Jesuit, and that so soon upon his promise unto us." Yet this was exactly what Charles had done, and was a dark omen of what England was to expect from him through the tragic years to follow. The Commons followed this question with another. A certain Richard Montague had won notoriety by extreme Anglo-Catholic and Arminian views. Parliament had tried previously to bring him to book, but Charles adroitly appointed him a Royal Chaplain, and privilege was pleaded. The case of Montague is important, because it raised the whole question of government and discipline in the Church. Laud maintained that the King and the Bishops were the sole authorities. The Commons refused to take this view. They were Erastians, and believed that so long as the State supported the Church

it was responsible for what went on in it. Charles's first Parliament was composed, it should be remembered, almost exclusively of Episcopalians, and old-fashioned State Churchmen. It was not a distaste for Episcopacy as such, but only the impossibility of reconciling it with popular privilege and national progress that drove Members of the Commons at last to form a "root-and-branch" party to abolish the existing system of government and discipline, and substitute one in which the priest should have less absolute power. To Laud, as to the Parliament, more was at stake in the case of Montague than met the eye. Laud was fashioning the Church after his own mind. He had given Charles a list of clergy marked O and P, as they were Orthodox and Puritan. The "orthodox" were to be preferred, and the "Puritan" were to be neglected. In this way Laud trusted to be able to force his own theories on a reluctant people, and to wield the Royal patronage in the interests of a party.

So far as Buckingham's policy was concerned, the attitude of the Commons changed from suspicion to open hostility. Even the determination of Charles to break his promises to France and consent to put the penal laws in force against the Catholics did not materially improve the situation. The Commons would vote no supplies; and the first Parliament of Charles I. was brought peremptorily to an end. But a few months passed before Parliament had to be summoned again. The finances of the country were becoming desperate. There had been an ill-conceived and ill-executed expedition against Cadiz, which had produced small gain and less glory. Little as Charles liked the necessity, he had no alternative but to summon Parliament; but he did all that was possible to shape it to his mind. He contrived to have a number of the

leaders of the former Parliament elected High Sheriffs of their respective counties—an office which prevented their serving their country in Parliament. Eliot, however, was there, the breach between him and Buckingham not being absolute as yet. It became so this Session, for Eliot led the Commons in the impeachment of Buckingham, who was only saved by the King abruptly dissolving Parliament.

Between his second and third Parliaments Charles's affairs went from bad to worse. Relations with France, which had been strained for some time, came to an open rupture. Buckingham was hopeful that by coming apparently to the aid of the French Huguenots, the popularity of the Government would be increased. To raise money Charles resorted to what was euphemistically called a "loan"—a loan which it was morally certain would never be repaid. This forced "loan" was levied with the utmost difficulty. The refusal of certain well-known men to pay has become historic. John Hampden was one of the first; Sir John Eliot's resistance was certain; but special mention ought to be made of Sir Thomas Wentworth, afterwards Earl of Strafford. Wentworth's opposition was less to the manner of raising the money than to the wild purposes for which it was destined when it was raised, a fact that should be borne in mind when his subsequent career comes to be considered. Various other illegal expedients were resorted to with moderate success. Buckingham's proposal to debase the coinage was only overthrown by the resistance of the City of London. At last an ill-equipped expedition was despatched to the relief of Rochelle, with the Duke of Buckingham himself, who was never lacking in spirit and courage, for commander-in-chief. After months of suffering and bitter humiliation, the expedition ended in disaster, the uniform fate of

Charles's enterprises. Meanwhile in England two doughty Church champions had come to the defence of the Royal Prerogative. Dr. Robert Sibthorpe maintained that it was the duty of the prince "to direct and make laws," and the duty of the subjects to obey them actively, unless conscience absolutely forbade, and in any case passively. This was strong meat, but there was stronger to follow. Dr. Roger Manwaring set forth the duty of obeying the King, "as the ordinance of God, on pain of eternal damnation." To Charles all this sort of thing was seasonable doctrine; but he had difficulty in getting any bishop to license the publication of the sermons. Even Laud's stomach found Manwaring's meat a trifle strong, and he is said to have remonstrated with Charles. There was one prelate servile enough for anything. This was Montaigne, of London, a voluptuous old pluralist, the scandal of all honest men. Montaigne had no scruples about licensing these two sermons, and they duly appeared in print.

The year 1628 has a threefold significance for our purpose. It was the year of the Petition of Right, the assassination of Buckingham, and the birth of John Bunyan. The Petition of Right was mainly due to Thomas Wentworth. It was most reluctantly agreed to by Charles, and is as great an instrument of popular privilege as Magna Charta. The assassination of Buckingham removed the one man who had stood between Charles and Parliament, often incurring odium which by right would have attached to the King. His removal also strengthened the position of Laud in the counsels of Charles. The birth of Bunyan links us to the year of the "glorious revolution" in which he died, when the great movement for civil and religious liberty came at last after many vicissitudes to its own. The

liberties of the subject were stated explicitly in the great Petition of Right. No forced loans, gifts, benevolences, or taxes were to be levied save by Act of Parliament; and no man was to suffer in person or property for refusal to pay money not demanded by Parliament. Charles's acceptance of the Petition was the signal for an unprecedented outburst of national rejoicing. "My maxim is," he said, in announcing his assent, "that the people's liberties strengthen the King's prerogative, and that the King's prerogative is to defend the people's liberties"—handsome words, which, if he could have frankly and honestly accepted as a guiding principle, would have saved him the bitter journey which ended on the scaffold. In a few weeks' time it became known that the King would still levy the tax on imports and exports, called "tonnage and poundage," without any Parliamentary authority. The result was a fresh "remonstrance" from the Commons, and the speedy dissolution of Charles's third Parliament. Twelve fateful years were to elapse before the people's representatives were summoned again to speak the will of the nation.

The spirit in which Charles had determined to rule was evidenced by what followed immediately on the dissolution of Parliament. A well-known bishop—Neile, against whose discountenancing of Puritan preachers Oliver Cromwell had delivered his first speech in Parliament—had been promoted to Winchester. The scandalous Montaigne of London was sent to Durham, *en route* for the Archbishopric of York. This left London to Laud. Archbishop Abbot persisted in the crime of living and retaining his see; but he had no power, the duties of his office being entrusted to certain bishops, of whom Laud was the chief. A new accession to the King's party was Sir Thomas Went-

worth. Now that the Petition of Right had been conceded, Wentworth followed his natural bent in rallying to the prerogative. He was raised to the peerage, and it was understood that some high administrative post would be found for him. Of all those who perished with Charles in this blind attack on English privileges Wentworth was the noblest. He was an aristocrat, not more by birth than by temperament, and in stepping across on to the side of Charles he had merely followed an inevitable instinct. His opposition to the forced loan had been opposition to the government by which the King's interests had been so basely served, not to any sympathy with popular rights as such. He was conscious of his own great powers, and he proffered them to Charles that he might help to recover ground which bad administration had lost. To save the King Wentworth had first to identify himself with the King. He could hardly be expected to know that Charles was a man whom even a Wentworth could not save.

Laud loved the Parliament as little as Charles did; and now that he was no longer subject to its supervision, he pursued his policy more relentlessly than ever. The Puritan ministers, harassed and persecuted at every turn, found a haven of refuge in New England. Neal compiled a list of *sixty-seven* ministers of the Church of England who went out to America during these twelve years. The first considerable exodus of Puritans resulted in the foundation of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The founders of this colony, although Episcopalians by tradition and custom, decided to follow the Congregational order which had had such happy results in the original Plymouth Colony. It is said that four thousand planters settled in the new colonies during these twelve years, taking with them out of England a considerable amount of wealth, as well as the moral

and mental force which the mother country could ill afford to lose. Suicidal as the policy seems to us to-day, we recognise that Laud did not misconceive the situation. He knew that to change the faith of England, he must first break the Puritan spirit. He had no idea how unconquerable that spirit was, but he knew that unless it were broken his designs would come to nothing. He had the insight also to perceive that its strength was not so much political as theological. It was Calvinism that stood between Laud and the realisation of his dreams. The Arminianism so dear to his heart was a more pliant creed. We need not dispute that he had a profound distaste for Calvinistic doctrine, but we are convinced that the head and front of its offending was that the Calvinist was less plastic material in the hands of ecclesiastical authority. To break the Puritan spirit, then, he must break up the Puritan dogmas, and force upon the Church a less inflexible type of creed. But it was just here he failed. The Puritan might look on without open violence, while Laud transformed the externals of the Church ; but this attack upon his faith kindled him to active indignation. Arminianism began to loom large on the list of national grievances. Preachers and lecturers were forbidden to refer to predestination and election ; but the result was to give these doctrines a new sanctity and authority in the Puritan mind. Men like Bishop Davenant might express their sorrow that "an established doctrine of the Church should be so distasted" ; but Laud knew well that Calvinism and Prelacy were irreconcilable, and the Bishop only retained his see at the price of silence. Others there were who were not so easily subdued. The case of Dr. Alexander Leighton, the father of the famous and saintly Archbishop Leighton, is well known, and is one of the most horrible illustrations of the methods

3396.
of the Star Chamber. Leighton's offence was the publication of a slashing attack on hierarchy, under the title of "An Appeal to Parliament: Zion's Plea against Prelacy." The invective was violent enough, and the reference to the Queen as "a daughter of Heth" was construed into blasphemy and treason. Leighton was sentenced to the Fleet for life, to be fined £10,000, to be pilloried at Westminster and whipped, one of his ears cut off, his nose slit and his face branded with a hot iron; after a few days to be pilloried and whipped at Cheapside, his other ear shorn off, his nose slit on the other side, and his face branded on the other cheek; after which he was to be confined in close prison for the term of his natural life. After this execrable sentence had been pronounced, Laud pulled off his cap and gave thanks to God. So far as the physical mutilation was concerned this sentence was carried out to the letter, and the maimed but inflexible Puritan was committed to close prison, from whence he was only released ten years later—a pathetic wreck of humanity, scarce able to walk, see, or hear—in the year of the Long Parliament.

If this was the worst of Laud's cruelties it was very far from being the only one. "John Heyden, of Devonshire," for preaching after he had been forbidden, was sent to Bridewell, whipped and kept to hard labour; "here he was confined in a cold, dark dungeon during the whole winter, being chained to a post in the middle of a room, with irons on his hands and feet, having no other food but bread and water, and a pad of straw to lie on." But space would fail us altogether if we were to endeavour to set on record all that was suffered by these Nonconformist Confessors in the struggle which Laud waged so mercilessly against the Puritan spirit of England.

In 1633 his opportunity was enlarged, owing to the

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death of Archbishop Abbot, and his own promotion to the primacy. It is worthy of notice that he was now Chancellor of the Universities of Oxford and Dublin, Privy Councillor for England and Scotland, first Commissioner of the Exchequer, and one of the Committee for trade and for the King's revenues. The appointment of Churchmen to high offices in the State was part of Laud's policy. In 1636 he persuaded Charles to appoint the Bishop of London Lord Treasurer, and writes, with exultation in his diary, "No Churchman had it since Henry the Seventh's time . . . and now if the Church will not hold up themselves under God, I can do no more."

In the Court of the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission Laud and one or two kindred spirits exercised supreme power. The latter Court existed for trying purely ecclesiastical cases. Its powers were "to visit, reform, redress, order, correct, and amend all errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities whatsoever." The bishops were the principal members, and three might form a quorum. Even the Royalist Clarendon says, "the Bishops grew to have so great a contempt of the common law and of the professors of it, that prohibitions from the supreme courts of law which have, and must have, the superintendency over all inferior courts were not only neglected, but the judges reprehended for granting them." To Charles, however, the Court was a veritable gold-mine. Exorbitant fines were exacted for insignificant offences against Church, creed, and order. Lecturers were fined £1,000 for preaching against Popery and Arminianism. The case of Sir Giles Alington is famous, who was fined £12,000 for marrying his niece. As for the silencings, suspensions, and deprivations of Puritan ministers and lecturers, they were almost

innumerable. The "little, low, red-faced man," as Laud was called, who could not, so Clarendon says, "debate anything without some commotion," had fairly "grated his way to the mastery," and for a space of years held England in the hollow of his hand. Well, indeed, does Professor Masson quote in regard to him, "Parvo regitur mundus intellectu."

Had some friends put into his hands in these days a copy of two poems, one called "Comus, a Masque," and the other entitled "Lycidas," it is doubtful whether he would have appreciated their significance. Yet these two poems of young John Milton were more ominous of disaster to Laud, and his narrow ecclesiasticism and his perversion of "the beauty of holiness," than all the bitter pamphlets which he was so busy suppressing. While he was endeavouring to chastise the Puritan spirit out of the British people, this young Cambridge poet had given to the spirit of Puritanism its noblest literary expression in Comus, and had, as he himself said, foretold in Lycidas, "the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height." While Laud was for disestablishing Puritanism from the place it held in the heart of England, Milton was making it the possession of the world and of all the centuries. The soul of the English people was not with Laud, riveting ecclesiastical bonds upon the nation with whippings and pilloryings, hacking off ears, splitting of noses, and branding of cheeks; it was with this young prophet of liberty and moral purity, who was to become the most eminent and consistent, and eloquent advocate, in his own or any age, of the ideal of "a Free Church in a Free State."

Violence breeds violence, and the spirit of Englishmen was not yet so broken as to bear the new yoke with tame compliance. When recriminations ensued they were not gentle. A Laud on one side produces a

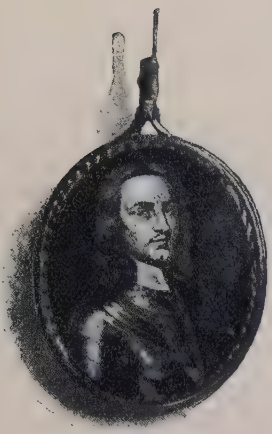
William Prynne on the other. Nothing is more unfair than to accuse the vehemence of Prynne with no consideration of the causes which provoked it. Puritanism was being everywhere silenced. Its lecturers were gagged, and its preachers were suppressed. In Parliament its voice had made itself heard, but there was no prospect of Parliament being summoned. There remained the Press. The pamphlet was the thing; dangerous to the author and to the publisher, but the one instrument left by which effectual protest could be made against civil and ecclesiastical despotism. Prynne dipped his pen in wormwood and wrote. He was a lawyer; and no man with any respect for English law could fail to be indignant at the contempt for even the bare forms of law of which Charles and Laud were guilty. Doubtless it would have been better to have published a calm and dignified protest against those who had erected themselves "above the law." Prynne's books and pamphlets were not calm and dignified; they were often tedious and as often abusive, and they were uniformly intolerant. He would have established Calvinism by all the processes which Laud dedicated to Arminianism. But he had a genuine hatred of the immoralities and indecencies which were tolerated in English life while Laud was seeking to make clean the outside of the cup and the platter. His first trial concerned a book in which he had exposed the fashionable stage-plays. As usual he made little attempt to discriminate, and as the Queen was known to be much given to this diversion, and had even appeared in theatricals herself, it was easy to argue that the book was treasonable. If Prynne had blasphemed the Christian faith, or endeavoured to subvert public morals, his punishment could hardly have been severer. He was condemned to lose both ears, to pay a fine of

£5,000, and to be imprisoned for life. Dr. Bastwick was a Colchester physician. He borrowed time, however, from his own profession to acquaint himself with the great ecclesiastical dispute of the day. A book of his, arguing that bishops and presbyters were of equal authority, cost him his professional standing, excommunication, a fine of £1,000, and imprisonment till he recanted. The Rev. Mr. Burton, a minister of the Gospel, preached two sermons against the innovations in the Church, and was committed a close prisoner to the Gatehouse, where he was confined for several years. Nothing daunted by these sufferings, they possessed themselves of pens and ink in their prisons, and to Laud's measureless indignation, succeeded in smuggling through the Press more pamphlets assailing the existing oppression in Church and State. The fury of the authorities knew no bounds, and apparently terror mingled with their anger. Prynne was sentenced to have the stumps of his ears hacked off, while Bastwick and Burton were to have their ears cut off, after which each prisoner was to be sent away to solitary confinement. This time the sympathy of the public with the prisoners was demonstrated after a fashion that might have given Laud cause for reflection. Bastwick's wife received his ears into her lap, and kissed them. Men and women exhorted them to be of good cheer, and to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. As they were marched away to their several prisons, crowds turned out to greet them and to show them kindness. Prynne was eventually lodged in Jersey, Burton in Guernsey, and Bastwick in a fort in the Scilly Islands. Pen, ink, and paper were rigidly denied them, and no friends were allowed to see them.

There is no doubt that popular sympathy was with them, because it was recognised that they were martyrs

at the hands of absolutism in the Church, even as John Hampden was a martyr at the hands of absolutism in the State. At the very time of their public mutilation, Hampden was fighting for popular and Parliamentary rights against the imposition of ship-money. In order to fit out a fleet to fight the Dutch, Charles ordered writs to be issued demanding contributions from certain counties. The need might be urgent, or it might not. Charles had pledged his royal word in the "Petition of Right" not to impose taxation without consent of Parliament. Neither he, nor Laud, dared to face a Parliament; so the easier alternative was to break his promise. Buckinghamshire being one of the counties concerned, John Hampden was the recipient of a "demand note" for the sum of twenty shillings. It was a trifling amount, but large enough to represent a deathblow to English liberties. If Charles could get money without a Parliament, it was goodbye to any effective assertion of the national will. Hampden refused to pay; and the case was tried before twelve judges. Charles had done his best to pack the bench with his creatures, yet the majority against Hampden was only seven to five. The notorious Chief Justice Finch, eminent for servility, declared that if any Act of Parliament touched the King's prerogative it was void. The King had absolute control over the persons and properties of his subjects. After that it was manifest that the "rights and liberties of the subject" was an empty and meaningless phrase. Thoughtful men began to see the nature of the struggle that lay before the people of England.

Yet, deep as the discontent with "personal government" was in the south of his dominions, it was in Scotland that the smouldering embers broke into conflagration. The episcopacy imposed by James



JOHN HAMPDEN.

(From a Miniature in Monochrome by Pettitot.)

upon the Scottish Church had never been popular, but it had provoked no determined resistance. Episcopacy, however, without canon and rubrics, was to Laud a poor makeshift, and accordingly measures had been taken to prepare canons and a Book of Prayer, to which the ministers and people of Scotland must conform, or incur the penalties that English Nonconformists had to suffer. In 1637 the new ecclesiastical clothes fashioned by English tailors for the soul of Scotland were ready to be sent north. Every minister was commanded to buy two copies of the new book, and it was henceforth to be read in every parish church. It had not been thought necessary to consult the Church of Scotland on the matter. Archbishop Laud had no misgivings as to his capacity and authority. The start was not auspicious. There was a riot in St. Giles', Edinburgh, and Jenny Geddes made herself an everlasting name by aiming a stool at the head of the Dean; while Lindsay, Bishop of Edinburgh, narrowly escaped injury at the hands of the mob. A few fanatics might have mattered little, but as it turned out, Scotland was behind the rioters, prepared, if it came to the test, to supplement Jenny Geddes' stool with more deadly missiles. In a moderate, but firm petition Alexander Henderson gave expression to the deep and solemn convictions of the Scottish people. The only effect of this outbreak on Charles and Laud was to enrage them. They took the Scottish bishops to task for their timidity. They insisted that the book must be adopted and its usage enforced. It was easy to be bold and confident in Lambeth, but the bishops in the North were realising what pent forces of discontent and pride and worthy aspiration had been suddenly released. Edinburgh became at once the centre of a national movement. Charles's proclamation,

that all strangers were to leave the capital under pain of outlawry, was as fuel to the flames. The petitioners against the new order and discipline organised themselves for resistance, and appointed Commissioners to represent them. So the struggle was joined.

The great device of the Commissioners for making the voice of Scotland articulate was the Covenant. There had been a covenant in James's time of those who vowed to defend the kingdom against Popery. This earlier covenant was now enlarged, and contained a demand for the restitution of the ancient kirk order as it was before episcopal innovations began. The Covenant was signed, first by the nobles, next by the ministers, and then by the people. On the flat tombstones in Grey Friars Churchyard the historic document was signed by hundreds and thousands of men and women, amid many tears and prayers and mutual exhortations and ejaculations of passionate resolve. They were signing their dearest conviction—that of the right of a people to determine what its own religious faith and worship should be.

The King's reply was to send the Marquis of Hamilton to Scotland to flatter the hopes of the people until new plans were concerted for bringing them to their senses and reducing them to submission. Hamilton had a thankless task, and he knew it. The temper of the people was unmistakable. Indeed, Scotland was finding its soul. The assertion was beginning to be heard that "the right to hold assemblies" was given by Christ to His Church, and the word of the King had no authority either way. Charles's "declarations" were met by counter "protestations." Laud's "I am determined to be obeyed" was met by "we will never have the book." There could be only one outcome to such a conflict of wills.

That this outcome was inevitable was easy to gather from the proceedings at the Assembly held in Glasgow Cathedral in November, 1638. Beaten at every point, Hamilton dissolved the Assembly and withdrew. The Assembly refused to be dissolved, and continued to sit until it had abolished episcopacy, and condemned the service book, and denounced Laud's system root and branch. The defiance of the Scots was as uncompromising as they could make it. If after that the yoke of episcopacy was to be reinforced, it could only be by force of arms. Charles must now raise an army, or yield to the Kirk. He could not do the one, and he would not do the other. To raise an adequate army he must call a parliament, and he still persisted in putting off the evil day. The Scots under Alexander Leslie marched south to the border, and when Charles met them with his ill-paid, undisciplined and unenthusiastic army there was nothing for it but to make terms. A General Assembly was to meet in Edinburgh, and a Scotch Parliament immediately afterwards, and Charles undertook to accept their conditions. So ended what is called in history the first Bishops' war. Charles was bent on gaining time. He had hopes that Wentworth across the Channel would be able to rouse Catholic Ireland against covenanting Scotland ; and he persisted in believing that the majority of his English subjects approved of what he and Laud were doing. The Edinburgh Assembly ratified the decisions of the Glasgow Assembly, and the Parliament gave these decisions the force of law. Then Charles temporised. He had no notion of yielding while any fraction of a hope remained that the situation in England might improve. Wentworth's counsel was now all-powerful at Court. At his instigation the first Parliament of 1640 was summoned. It sat for three weeks, and was then violently dissolved,

because it insisted on discussing grievances before voting supplies. Pym, who had taken Sir John Eliot's place, as leader of the Commons, delivered weighty and memorable indictments of the policy and arbitrary rule of Charles and Laud in State and Church. It was clear that Charles would get no satisfaction from Parliament. Yet Wentworth was still confident that the situation could be grappled with and the Scots subdued. He spoke confidently of 10,000 Irish troops that were to conquer Scotland and bring recalcitrant English subjects to their senses. Ship-money was levied and resisted; loans and benevolences were wrung with infinite difficulty out of a reluctant country. The City of London refused point-blank to lend, and Wentworth (now Lord Strafford) was for hanging some of the officials for obstinacy. Riots took place in Lambeth, from which Laud escaped only with difficulty. The Queen urged an application to the Pope for money. Strafford pleaded with Spain for a loan, promising her Irish aid to crush her Protestant adversaries, the Dutch. The coinage was debased, shillings worth threepence being issued, a measure that provoked the determined opposition of all interested in trade and commerce. The Mastership of the Rolls was sold for £15,000, and other offices were disposed of in the open market. In the midst of the distemper of the time new Canons were promulgated for the English Church, the main purpose of which would seem to have been to exalt the royal prerogative. It was too late. To all, save Laud and Strafford and their few sympathisers, it was evident that Charles had strained the prerogative till it had snapped. No amount of Canons could re-establish the hopelessly discredited theory of the Divine right of kings. The Scots were again marching south to demand a settlement; and some of the first nobility in England were in communi-

cation with them. In truth the grievances of the two realms were the same; and only a Parliament could deal with them. Charles and Strafford went North to take the field, but there was no fight in their troops, and the result was a treaty at Ripon by which a cessation of hostilities was agreed upon for two months while a Parliament met at Westminster. On November 3, 1640, the Long Parliament assembled.

The problems to which Parliament had to apply itself were gigantic. "The judges have overthrown the law, and the bishops the Gospel," was a terse statement of the situation. "We well know," said Rudyard, "what disturbance hath been brought into the Church for petty trifles; how the whole Church, the whole kingdom, hath been troubled where to place a metaphor—an altar! We have seen ministers, their wives, children and families undone against the law, against conscience, against all bowels of compassion, about not dancing on Sundays. What do those sort of men think will become of themselves when the Master of the House shall come and find them beating their fellow-servants?" Such precisely had been the effect of the régime of Archbishop Laud. The House was convinced, with Pym, that there had been "a design to alter law and religion."

That the House would proceed to impeach Strafford was certain. Strafford had come to London on Charles's express assurance that he "should not suffer in his person, honour or fortune," and he was still satisfied to put his trust in princes. But not Charles's goodwill, nor his own consciousness of rectitude, could save him from the rising storm. Not consciously, perhaps, but none the less actually, he had endeavoured, as the Commons said, to "subvert the constitution," by upholding absolutism, and his proposal to lead ten thousand Irish Catholics against England was a rash threat which the

Parliament would neither forgive nor forget. "Upon the word of a King," Charles wrote to him, "you shall not suffer." But he had to deal with an angry and resolute nation, and to save his family and his throne there was nothing for it but to sacrifice Strafford; and, on May 12, 1641, the once all-powerful Wentworth was beheaded on Tower Hill, his death a signal to the world, blood-red, of the sovereignty of the people of England over their national affairs.

Before Strafford died, Laud had been lodged in the Tower, and many of his victims had been released from confinement. Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick, had been received with tumultuous enthusiasm by the London citizens, and poor Alexander Leighton was brought out of "the loathsome and ruinous dog-hole," where he had been latterly immured. The broken and mutilated old man of seventy-two was an object to move the compassion and indignation of less sensitive people than the majority of Londoners, who were now waiting for the exemplary punishment of his persecutor. Riots in churches were not uncommon, and forcible demolition of Communion-rails, surplices, and service-books, went on in all parts of the Kingdom. Through the Press there was a veritable explosion of long-stifled convictions and suppressed opinions. One of the most significant publications was the reply of Smectymnuus to Bishop Hall's "Episcopacy of Divine Right." Smectymnuus was a fanciful word coined by taking the initials of the authors—*S*tephen *M*arshall, *E*dmund *C*alamy, *T*homas *Y*oung, *M*atthew *N*ewcomen, and *W*illiam *S*purstow. This book was a carefully-reasoned and temperate argument against the high episcopal claims of which Bishop Hall had made himself the mouthpiece. In fact, opinion was ripening among the people that the bishops were a perpetual menace to popular rights and

liberties. Fifteen thousand "citizens and inhabitants of London" signed the famous Root and Branch petition which was presented to the House on December 11, 1640. It demanded the entire sweeping away of hierarchical government. Seven hundred beneficed clergymen sent in another petition praying for a reformation of the hierarchy. Counter-petitions followed, which showed that the leading Laudian principles had imposed themselves successfully on many parishes—"no bishops, no church,"; "no bishops, no valid ordinations"; "no bishops, no Presbyters, and consequently no Eucharist." Parliament was very far from conceding the claim of episcopacy to be *jure Divino;* but there is evidence that the majority were of Lord Falkland's judgment, that "bishops may be good men, and let us but give good men good rules, and we shall have good government and good times." In other words, let Parliament keep the bishops in their place, and see to their good behaviour, and the episcopate may still be tolerated. The House was unanimous for reformation, but the existence of a root-and-branch party in it for the first time was a fact of the utmost significance. To this party such men as John Hampden and his cousin, Oliver Cromwell, must now be regarded as definitely belonging.

It will readily be believed that with the Long Parliament firmly established, and exercising authority, Nonconformity began to hold up its head. Ministers who had taken refuge in Holland took advantage of the new liberty to return and exercise their ministry at home. Thomas Goodwin began work in St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, London; Philip Nye found his way from Arnheim to Kimbolton in Huntingdonshire; William Bridge crossed from Rotterdam to Yarmouth; while Jeremiah Burroughs and Sidrach Simpson became

lecturers in London. These were all Independents of the somewhat mild type favoured by John Robinson. But Bishop Hall asserts that in London and its suburbs alone there sprang up in 1641 "no fewer than fourscore congregations of several sectaries, instructed by guides fit for them, cobblers, tailors, felt-makers, and such-like trash." Even from America many returned who had watched the successful experiment of Congregationalism in that new commonwealth. Young Sir Harry Vane, now an ex-Governor of Massachusetts, had returned in 1637. The famous Hugh Peters came over in 1641. Numbers of less well-known individuals brought back to the mother country their experience of the Congregational order of Church government. Burton had returned from his imprisonment an out-and-out Separatist and Independent; and young John Lilburne, another of Laud's victims, "the most bull-headed young obstinate that ever came from the county of Durham," though he had been Prynne's law-clerk, had no affection for Prynne's Presbyterianism, but put forth a pamphlet "Come out of Her, my People. . . . A Just Apology for the Way of Total Separation." Independency was to have a nobler convert soon. In 1641 John Milton had written three anti-episcopal pamphlets, unburdening his soul against prelatical oppression with all the generous vehemence of a young patriot. They were *anti*-episcopal with a vengeance, but so far as they were *pro* anything they were *pro*-Presbyterian. He had not yet reached his conviction that new presbyter is but old priest writ large; but there are signs that he was studying the Independent pamphlets, and when in 1642 he published "The Reason of Church Government" there may be discerned throughout, to quote Professor Masson, "a certain vague melting towards Independency." In this year, too, a letter was sent to

the American colonies to ask that certain of their ministers might be sent over to participate in the discussions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. This letter was signed by five peers, and thirty-four other persons, among whom were Oliver Cromwell, Arthur Hazelrig, and Nathaniel Fiennes.

In the meanwhile the relations between Charles and his people had come to an open rupture. If ever it could be said of any war that it was the result of the conflict of irreconcileable ideals as to which no compromise was possible, it could be said of this one. Even the Government of the State admitted of easier settlement than the government of the Church. The House of Commons was only united in its fear and hatred of Popery, and its impatience with the sectaries. It was resolved not "to loose the golden reins of discipline." The only policy on which it was agreed was a policy of intolerance. In the eyes of Parliament Charles's cause was more and more prejudiced by the aggressive Romanism of the Court of the Queen. Her schemes and intrigues were as endless as they were fatuous, and her influence over her husband was now almost absolute. While appearing to make concessions to the Parliament, he was in reality looking to Holland, to France, to Spain, to Ireland, even to the Pope, for alien troops to overwhelm his own subjects. He had sought a reconciliation with Scotland, and had appeared in Edinburgh coquetting with the Presbyterian leaders, and scattering promises with open hand. Only the shrewdest men read him truly, and knew that the end he contemplated was the restoration of the prerogative and the Laudian uniformity, and that to this end he would not hesitate to consecrate all means that might offer. It is unnecessary to set out the various steps that led up to the final rupture. Suffice it to say, that his belief that

Parliament intended to call Queen Henrietta to account led to his abortive attempt to arrest the five members, Pym, Hampden, Hazelrig, Holles and Strood. After that there could be no accommodation. Charles succeeded in shipping Henrietta off to France with the Crown jewels and her children. Then he went North, and ultimately on August, 22, 1642, the Royal Standard was unfurled at Nottingham and the Civil War began.

CHAPTER VII.

The Doctrine of Toleration.

The Parliament had drawn the sword for Constitutional rights, but not for religious liberty. The story of the next few months is the story of the definite emergence of a new issue. Archbishop Laud was in prison awaiting his trial and death. His day was over. The prelatical cause he had championed had taken shelter under the standard of the King. Laud had shown no mercy to the Puritan party in the Establishment, and now that that party was fairly in the ascendency no mercy would be shown to him and his friends. Nothing was common to Laud and the Puritan Erastians, save the hatred of toleration. Each party accused the other of being a persecuting party. During the opening months of the war the Parliament gradually inclined towards a Presbyterian settlement of the State-Church; and as it became evident that Scotland would be called upon to throw her weight into the balance against Charles, the expediency of establishing Presbyterianism in England was recognised. The war was being waged with varying fortune in all parts of the Kingdom. At Edgehill an inconclusive battle was fought. John Hampden was mortally wounded on Chalgrove Field. After an abortive advance on London, Charles had taken up his headquarters at Oxford. Essex, the Parliamentary general, was slow and unen-

thusiastic. In 1643 the result was stale-mate. The country was suffering all the misery of a state of war, and was as far from deciding the issue as when hostilities began.

All unknown to the Parliament a greater issue was being decided within the army than even the national quarrel with the King. An experiment was being made which was to have far-reaching results. It was inevitable that in recruiting the Puritan army, men of every variety of Protestant opinion should crowd into the ranks. The despised Separatists were now discovered to be a valuable national asset. They were men of conviction and resolution; men whose forefathers had gone to the stake or to prison sooner than abjure their faith. Here was the stuff out of which soldiers could be made capable of holding their own against the Cavaliers of Charles in the open field. But as they flocked to the Parliamentary standard it was abundantly evident that they had no intention of leaving their religion behind them. Their willingness to risk their lives in their country's service was bound up with the permission to worship God after their own fashion. The army thus became the most comprehensive Church of England that has ever been known in this country, a veritable Church militant in the most literal sense of the phrase. Men went down into the valley of the shadow of death side by side who held every variety of denominational opinion. Independents, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and devotees of a whole host of less considerable religious bodies, discovered in association a deep moral and spiritual agreement. Many ordained ministers were among them whose services were valued; but lay preachers abounded also, and in the prayer-meetings of the camp voices were lifted up in supplication that were asserting uncon-

HINCHINBROOKE HALL, THE ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE CROMWELLS.

[From a Photograph by Mr. Edward Lee.]

sciously the freedom of the spiritual life and the immediacy of personal access to God. It is little wonder that under such conditions a new idea should spread through the army like wildfire—the idea of a toleration; and that the great phrase "freedom of conscience" should be passed from mouth to mouth. It remained only for this new idea to find its prophet for it to be accepted in this crisis as the master-key to the intractable religious problem of the ages.

When Oliver Cromwell comes into prominence it is as something more than a captain of cavalry. He is the expositor and interpreter of this new idea. When and how he dissevered himself in thought from his fellow Parliamentarians we do not know. But both he and his cousin Hampden early became root-and-branch men; their thorough-going Protestantism brought them into sympathy with the Separatists. Cromwell was born at Huntingdon in 1599, and grew up to manhood in the fen country about Huntingdon and St. Ives. Like so many others among his Puritan associates, he found peace with God only after severe agonies of mind and searchings of heart. He was ever a fighter, and his first great fight was with himself and his own ungovernable temper and unregenerate will. When he entered Parliament it was as a man who believed that the greatest issue for every man had to be determined between his own soul and God. He took no great part in the early Parliamentary struggles with the King; but he was always to be found on the side of popular privilege. So keenly did he feel the peril to which absolutism had brought the country that he is credited with the determination to emigrate to America if the Parliament had failed to carry the Root-and-Branch Bill. He is now active more than most in recruiting and organising the Parliamentary army. Moreover, he has

his own ideas of the type of soldier who is wanted. He thinks God's battles can only be fought and won by God's men. "He who prays best and preaches best will fight best," he says. His own men were "a lovely company." He has searched for men "patient in wants, faithful and conscientious in their employment," and he has found them. Each trooper in Colonel Cromwell's company "knows what he fights for and loves what he knows." Behind those terrible swords of theirs, and those grim iron sides, lie convictions that fire their souls, and nerve their hearts. Even such Royalist witnesses as Chillingworth and Lord Clarendon bore tribute to the character of the men who served in the Parliament's army. "I confess," says Chillingworth, "their discourse and behaviour do speak Christians, but I can find little of God or godliness in our men." Lord Clarendon declares that the Commonwealth Army was "an army whose sobriety and manner, whose courage and success made it famous and terrible all over the world"; while the King's Army was "a dissolute, undisciplined, wicked, beaten army, whose horse their *friends* feared, being terrible only in plunder, and resolute only in running away." This contrast became more and more marked as Cromwell had his way in modelling the army of the Commonwealth. He brought to the fight men of ideas and beliefs, who were "armed well *within* with satisfaction of conscience."

We are apt to forget that enthusiasm waits upon ideas. To defend old precedents and privileges may be a good cause; but it is a policy of conservatism, and conservatism and enthusiasm have little in common. The early days of the war were unsatisfactory for the Puritan party, because the new and nobler principle and policy had not yet emerged. It was not simply a remodelled army that won the war, it was a

remodelled programme. The greater zeal displayed was due to the larger issue raised. Where the cry of "Parliamentary privilege" was strong but insufficient, the cry of "liberty of conscience" was irresistible.

Undoubtedly, a contributory factor to the success of the new ideal was to be found in the proceedings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. This famous Council was summoned by Parliament to "settle" the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. It consisted of some 149 members, of whom thirty were laymen, and of the 119 divines a few were Episcopalians, five were Independents, while the rest favoured a Presbyterian and Calvinistic settlement. The Episcopalians withdrew from the council early, and the only opposition to the rigid Calvinism and Presbyterianism of the Assembly came from the five Independents, and one or two of the laymen—notably John Selden, the famous jurist. In the debates in the Assembly the five Independents, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughs, and William Bridge exercised an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. Before entering the Assembly they had made their own position explicit by a document bearing the horrible title, "Apologetical Narration." It was better than its title. The principal contents were: (1) That the signatories believed the supreme rule in Church matters to be the pattern of the primitive or Apostolic Churches. (2) That they would not bind themselves by their present judgment in any matter against a possible future change of judgment. (3) That they would study accommodation as far as they could to the judgments of others. The whole "Narration" was an able and moderate address, designed to appeal perhaps less to the Assembly than to Parliament and to the people. The Assembly met for the first time on

July 1, 1643, in Henry VII.'s Chapel, but most of its subsequent meetings were held in the Jerusalem Chamber. We shall not follow it through its almost endless discussions of insoluble problems of faith, and details of order. Suffice it to say that the nation wearied of the interminable debates, while the evident determination of the majority to enforce their findings as rigorously as Archbishop Laud had enforced his own Church dogmas convinced tens of thousands of people of the justice of Milton's affirmation, that "New presbyter is but old priest writ large." The Independents might make no impression on the granite anti-tolerationism of the Assembly, but they were creating an effect outside which would become in turn an efficient cause of greater consequences still.

The war dragged on. Essex was still "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike," lest in striking he should do the King more hurt than he intended. On the whole Charles's cause prospered; and Parliament felt that if the situation was to be saved, negotiations must be opened with the Scots. Young Sir Harry Vane was a principal Commissioner for the purpose, and the Scots proved sympathetic, but their alliance was only to be purchased at the price of a "Solemn League and Covenant" of the two nations. "The English," says Baillie, "were for a civil league, we for a religious covenant." The English had come to beg, and were not in a position to choose. The Commissioners agreed, and after a few modifications the Parliament and the Assembly of Divines set the ball rolling, by swearing to the Covenant in St. Margaret's Church with uplifted hands. London followed, and then all the country over the historic document was signed. It was seemingly the triumph of Presbyterianism in England, for the Assembly now had its "test," which every householder must satisfy or

take the consequences. In such a document as this, waved in the face of any recusant, with a "Sign, or else ——!" the opponents of toleration had the weapon they were seeking against "freedom of conscience." For the Covenant pledged its signatories to endeavour to bring the Churches of the three Kingdoms "to the nearest conjunction and uniformity;" "to endeavour the extirpation of Popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism;" "to endeavour to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the Kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's person and authority"; to endeavour the discovery of all "incendiaries, malignants, and evil instruments" who had hindered the reformation of religion. A curious and remarkable document, which many must have signed with foreboding of evil, and accepted only as the heavy price to be paid for a sorely-needed alliance.

The appearance of a Presbyterian army was to give Presbyterianism in England the necessary backing of force. But, alas, the Scottish army distinguished itself as little as Essex's army had done, to the great disappointment of many good Presbyterians in the Assembly. Meanwhile Independency was spreading daily among the army men who meant business. Baillie writes to Scotland, in distraction, of the fact that "two parts" of the armies of Manchester, Essex, and Waller are "for them"—*i.e.*, the Independents—"and these of the far most resolute and confident men." The reason was that these men were in the grip of a new enthusiasm; waking to the vision of a free Commonwealth and a free Church. Baillie has begun now to single out Cromwell as "the great Independent." The five Independents in the Assembly were pleading for freedom for themselves and their

fellow-Congregationalists. But Cromwell and his soldiers had larger thoughts, and were about to fight for them, not with verbal arguments, but with pike and musket. Their opportunity came on July 2, 1644, at Marston Moor, when "the bloodiest battle of the whole war" was fought. Even more certainly than it was a Parliamentary victory, it was an Independent victory. Many of the Scots behaved ill, and the conclusive master-stroke of the battle was Cromwell's own. His "lovely company" was irresistible; and the issue of the day was to make it clear that the destinies of England lay in the hands of Cromwell and his men.

The ascendency of Cromwell must mean the ascendency of his ideas. It was decided on Marston Moor that liberty of conscience must become a fundamental privilege of the English Commonwealth. Almost at the very period of Marston Moor, one of the most notable pamphlets hitherto published in England came from the press. It was entitled "The Bloudy Tenent (Tenet) of Persecution for Cause of Conscience discussed in a Conference between Truth and Peace." Its author was one of the most famous of the early vindicators of freedom of conscience—Roger Williams. No history of the Free Church movement could be complete that did not contain a sketch of the extraordinary career of this remarkable man, the fiery evangelist of toleration.

Roger Williams went out to New England in 1631, a young Welshman, Oxford-bred, who had been a *protégé* of the celebrated Sir Edward Coke. Like so many others, he went to New England because there was no room for him in Old England, his religious opinions being what they were. He is described by Mr. Fiske, the American historian, as "learned, quick-witted, pugnacious"; yet "with all his love of controversy there has perhaps never lived a more gentle and kindly

soul." He became minister at Salem in the colony of Massachusetts, and forthwith began to teach and to preach the doctrine of religious liberty and toleration in its most developed form. His views involved "the entire separation of Church from State, the equal protection of all forms of religious faith, the repeal of all laws compelling attendance on public worship, the abolition of tithes and of all forced contributions to the support of religion." The only fault to be found with these opinions is that they were generations before their time; and for that fault Williams had much to suffer. As the easiest way of getting rid of him, it had been decided to kidnap him and ship him back to England. But Williams had wind of this, and with his wife and family he plunged into the forest, and for fourteen weeks lived principally among the Indians, with whom he could converse freely, and among whom he seems to have made some rough attempts at evangelisation. Edward Winthrop appears to have suggested to him that at Narragansett Bay he might settle without molestation; and accordingly he founded there the Providence colony which became a veritable city of refuge for all sorts of religious cranks and fanatics, but which had for its distinction that it was the freest place of habitation on the face of the earth. Before he fled, however, from the neighbourhood of Boston he had had the opportunity of exercising his influence over a distinguished young Englishman whose name in history is very noble, Sir Henry Vane the younger. This latter had imbibed views at Geneva that sorely troubled his old father, and had come to New England to become still further initiated into religious democracy and republicanism. He returned to England later on, as we know, and entered public life there; but the sympathies he carried back with him from New England were those

he had derived rather from Roger Williams than from the more orthodox colonists. Williams had now become a Baptist, which widened the gulf between him and those who had exiled and excommunicated him. He was bent on obtaining a charter of incorporation for his colony, and now that the Parliament was in power, and Sir Harry Vane one of its leaders, he saw his opportunity, and in 1643 he arrived in London. He got his charter, of course, without difficulty, but he did more than that. He wrote and published this famous dialogue between Truth and Peace, in defence of full and complete freedom of conscience.

The significance of Williams' visit at this time will be easily appreciated. There is little reason to doubt that he saw much of Sir Harry Vane, and in all probability of such influential thinkers and teachers as John Goodwin and John Milton. He may also, very probably, have had interviews with Cromwell, to whom, some think, he was related. After exploding his pamphlet at the advocates of religious persecution he took ship for America; and the Westminster Assembly promptly gave orders for the public burning of his book "concerning the tolerating of all sorts of religion." He had expected this. "I confess I have little hope," he had written, "till those flames are over, that this discourse against the doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience should pass current, I say not amongst the wolves and lions, but even amongst the sheep of Christ themselves. Yet *liberavi animam meam*, I have not hid within my breast my soul's belief."

Roger Williams was not the only object of the Assembly's wrath by any means. Other offenders whose names were submitted to Parliament to be dealt with severely were Hanserd Knollys, the Baptist; John Goodwin, the Arminian; and John Milton, who had

CROMWELL'S HOUSE AT ELY.

(From a Photograph by Mr. Edward Law.)

published a treatise on divorce. Marston Moor, however, had sensibly impaired the Assembly's authority; and instead of persecutions Cromwell had got a motion through the House in favour of an endeavour to find out "how far tender consciences may be borne with"—a motion that seemed to the Presbyterians the presage of the reign of anti-Christ. "The great shot of Cromwell and Vane," cries the horrified Baillie, "is to have a liberty for all religions." This would make England a refuge for men of all creeds, such as Amsterdam had been, "would lead, in fact, to Amsterdamnation," as Professor Masson wittily puts it.

Cromwell and his friends, however, had more serious business on hand than to fence with the Divines on Church dogma and polity. Charles's power had to be broken. Parliament had to be converted to the idea that Essex and Manchester would never end the war, and that the army must be placed on a sounder financial footing. This meant the remodelling of the army, and the appointment of that fine soldier, Sir Thomas Fairfax, to be Commander-in-Chief. There was plentiful opposition from those whose hearts were not truly in this great business of destroying absolutism; but the reformers won the day, and Cromwell betook himself to his beloved Eastern counties to raise footmen and cavalry. Everywhere the inspiration of his personality and the cause he represented produced an extraordinary response to his appeal. Volunteers flocked to his standard. The efficiency of the new model was demonstrated on Naseby field, where, on June 14, 1645, the King's army was fairly annihilated as a fighting force, Cromwell once again earning the laurels of the day. He felt able now to write to Parliament in a bolder strain. "He that ventures his life," so runs his letter to the Speaker, "for the liberty of his country,

I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for."

There was one who had not been suffered to live to see the wreck of his hopes in the overthrow of the Royalist cause. In January of this year Archbishop Laud was sent to the block. His grey hairs must have pleaded for mercy ; but otherwise there was little to inspire pity in his powerful adversaries, whose watchword, like his own, was Intolerance. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again" might well have been in the old man's thoughts as he walked to the scaffold. As a Churchman he had grasped the Sword of State to enforce obedience, and having taken the sword had now to perish by it. His spirit, his methods, his aims lived in his bitterest foes. Uniformity was still the idol to which those in power bowed down. He was slain with the sword himself had sharpened. At the block he declared his loyalty to Protestantism and the Church of England. The declaration was undoubtedly sincere and honest. Yet are we bound to admit that if he had had his way there would have been little or nothing left of Protestantism in England, save the name. A fortnight after Laud's execution, eight resolutions were adopted by the Commons for the complete Presbyterianising of the Church of England. The new *Directory of Worship* and *Frame of Church Government* had been constructed by the Assembly, and the man of independent religious views might as little hope to escape from the Presbyterian discipline as from the Episcopal discipline of Laud. In view of this, the reader will appreciate the significance of Cromwell's words after Naseby fight.

Cromwell, moreover, had found his greatest ally. A pamphlet was making its way throughout the country, and awakening thought everywhere among men of intelligence. This was John Milton's *Areopagitica*, a plea

for unlicensed printing. It was probably the greatest English pamphlet ever written. It is a vindication of the right of an author to publish his opinions. It is a plea for an England that should be "the mansion-house of liberty." He is not one of those who is afraid that the cause of truth will suffer through a diversity of Free Churches. "Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of we should rejoice at, should praise rather this pious forwardness among men to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again." These signs everywhere of eager interest in religion, and this valiant thinking outside prescribed formulas "betoken us not degenerated nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again." Such was the spirit of Milton's dream. It has often been said that the pen is mightier than the sword, but Milton's pen and Cromwell's sword were here allied to make England

> A land where, girt by friend or foe,
> A man may speak the thing he will.

Time had been when the young Milton had believed in the Divine right of Presbyterianism. In 1641 he had published "The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy." In this pamphlet he treated the religious controversy as if it were a conflict of two alternatives, prelacy and presbytery. God, it was assumed, had given the one and only true model of Church government, and the State had set up a Church which had no warrant in the Scriptures. There are passages, however, in this early pamphlet which show how strongly Milton was opposed to clerical rule in the Church;

passages which declared his real kinship with the followers of Browne, Barrowe, and Robinson. He speaks of "the exclusion of Christ's people from the offices of holy discipline, through the pride of a usurping clergy;" and then follows this striking declaration:—

"When every good Christian, thoroughly acquainted with all those glorious privileges of sanctification and adoption which render him more sacred than any dedicated altar or element, shall be restored to his right in the Church, and not excluded from such place of spiritual government as his Christian abilities and his approved good life in the eye and testimony of the Church shall prefer him to, this and nothing sooner will open his eyes to a wise and true valuation of himself . . . and will stir him up to walk worthy the honourable and grave employment wherewith God and the Church hath dignified him; not fearing lest he should meet with some outward holy thing in religion which his lay-touch or presence might profane; but lest something unholy from within his own heart should dishonour and profane in himself that priestly-unction and clergy-right whereto Christ hath entitled him. Then would the congregation of the Lord soon recover the true likeness and visage of what she is indeed, a holy generation, a royal priesthood, a saintly communion, the household and city of God. And this I hold to be another considerable reason why the functions of Church government ought to be free and open to any Christian man, though never so laic, if his capacity, his faith, and prudent demeanour commend him. And this the Apostles warrant us to do."

It will hardly admit of dispute that the man who held by this ideal of the Church was at heart a Congregationalist, and that his proper place was by the side of Cromwell.

After Naseby, Cromwell was sent to the south-west

of England to reduce the Royalists there. His progress was one of unbroken victory. Into his letters and despatches he inserted many of those terse and powerful vindications of religious liberty and toleration which are so familiar to us all to-day. He was determined that the various Free Churches should have a right to live in England. "Presbyterians, Independents, all have here the same spirit of faith and prayer; the same presence and answer; pity is it should be otherwise anywhere. All that believe have the real unity, which is most glorious because inward and spiritual, in the Body and to the Head. For being united in form, commonly called uniformity, every Christian will, for peace sake, study and do as far as conscience will permit. And for brethren, in things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason."

It was high time to write in this strain. In less than a month after Naseby, John Goodwin was ejected from his vicarage of St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, and Henry Burton from his living in Friday Street. One of the most merciless of Presbyterian persecutors was William Prynne, who had suffered so much himself at the hands of Laud. He was for Presbytery against Prelacy; but equally he was for Presbytery against any other form of Church government whatsoever. John Lilburne could not hope to escape Prynne's vigilance. Lilburne was the representative of extreme individualism, and as obstinate in his way as Prynne was in his. It was wittily said that if John Lilburne were left alone in the world John would quarrel with Lilburne and Lilburne with John. Cromwell urged the House of Commons to remember Lilburne's services, but the House was in no humour for Cromwell's moderation, and Lilburne had three months of Newgate before he recovered his liberty. When he was released matters were

coming to a head in the Assembly of Divines. The Independents in the Assembly had hitherto been cautious in the extreme. But the rapid growth of their principles in the army and in the country had not been without its influence upon them. It must have been in November, 1645, that they exploded a bomb-shell in the Assembly; they declared for "an Indefinite Toleration." In other words, they took courage from the power of Cromwell's sword. Henceforth there was to be no question as to the position of English Independency. The left wing and the right wing had coalesced. Toleration was, as the ministers of the City of London declared, "the Great Diana of the Independents."

It is inevitable that in describing these great days our canvas should become crowded. Other notable figures call for some brief remark. A very interesting and attractive personality is that of Hugh Peters, Cromwell's army chaplain. He had had a varied and adventurous career. Born at Fowey in Cornwall, he was a graduate of Cambridge, a lecturer at St. Sepulchre's Church in London, a Separatist minister in Rotterdam, the successor of Roger Williams in Salem, Massachusetts, and now chaplain in the Parliamentary army. As Dr. Gardiner points out, Peters' toleration sprang from the natural kindliness and geniality of his heart. He cared very little for the jots and tittles on which theologians and ecclesiastics insisted. He was full of quaint, and sometimes rude illustrations such as exactly suited the taste of the army. He had a kindly hearing for the fads and fanaticisms of all the sectaries, and thought no worse of any man because he had a "maggot in his lug." He believed that if ministers prayed together and dined together they would discover that they were very much agreed and would "befool the devil and his instruments." He had, however, no hope of

Laud's priests, and the destruction of Royalism was as sacred a cause to him as the destruction of idolatry to an Israelite patriot of Old Testament times. A man of very different character had also found his way, in the capacity of chaplain, into the service of the Parliamentary forces. This was Richard Baxter, whose admirable autobiography is a very mine of information on the movements of his day. Baxter was by sympathy a Presbyterian, but he was no believer in the Divine right of any Church order. He was, however, horrified at the diversity of opinions in the army, and became very zealous for uniformity of creed, if not of worship. He was amazed at the "frequent and vehement disputes for liberty of conscience" among the soldiers; and their conviction that "the civil magistrate had nothing to do to determine of anything in matters of religion, by constraint or restraint." Baxter was for arguing the soldiers out of their individual eccentricities of belief, which caused him to be regarded coldly by Cromwell, who knew the disintegrating influence of a man of Baxter's prejudices upon the solidity of the army. Baxter never forgave Cromwell the very slighting recognition which was all the great soldier deigned to bestow upon him.

Another who, in an obscurer position, was nevertheless doing valiantly for the cause of religious liberty was the long-suffering Hanserd Knollys. Knollys was the son of a Lincolnshire rector, and was educated at Cambridge. In due course he was ordained a priest in the English Church and presented to a living near his father's sphere of work. As his knowledge and experience grew, however, his scruples increased, and like an honest man he resigned his parish. The famous Bishop Williams, of Lincoln, appears to have supposed that the scruples would disappear if he were offered a

richer living. It was the easy philosophy of a man of the world; but Knollys was superior to any such low motive. He was seeking a gift which he felt he did not possess, the higher endowment of the Christian ministry, such a baptism as is conditioned by absolute loyalty to truth. He did not seek in vain, but became a preacher of singular power and influence. This drew upon him the attention of the Court of High Commission, and he suffered his first imprisonment. On his release he followed the example of many like-minded men and set sail for America. There he had but a troubled time. He was not always wise, nor the colonists always tolerant. Knollys became a Baptist, and with Roger Williams challenged the right of the civil magistrate to compel conformity in matters of religion. Massachusetts was as little ripe for such opinions as London, and so having made up his mind that he "might as well be knocked about in *Old* England," he came back, as has been said, to a long futurity of that experience. At home he first taught school, and then became an army preacher among the Parliament soldiers. He was a very active propagator of Baptist views, persuading, among others, Henry Jessey, an Independent minister of excellent character and ability. Knollys was imprisoned for preaching these opinions in Bow Church. Afterwards he leased a place of meeting in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, where he organised a Baptist Church; later on he preached in Coleman Street and Finsbury Fields. On his preaching tours he was often roughly handled by the mob, and prosecuted more than once by local authorities. He was a keen defender of the Independent position against the Presbyterians. The latter made several efforts to silence him, but without effect. We shall hear of him again in the course of our history.

The Assembly of Divines, as we have seen, was for Presbyterian uniformity, and no toleration of Dissenters. Their ideal was as hostile to the existence of free churches as the prelatical ideal had been. From the Assembly the Toleraticnists would receive scant mercy; it remained to be seen what they could do through Parliament. In Parliament their position was improved by the necessity for filling up vacant seats. The Royalists had, of course, gone off with Charles; other members had died or resigned. As these vacancies came to be filled, the young officers of the New Model, and representative men who had caught the spirit of the new time from Cromwell, were returned to Parliament. Henry Ireton, young Colonel Fleetwood, Algernon Sidney, Edward Montague, and others bearing well-known names, came in to recruit the ranks of the Independents and Tolerationists. The Assembly was to be curbed. There were many whose hope it was, as Milton expressed it in his somewhat savage sonnet to the Assembly,

> That so the Parliament
> May with their wholesome and preventive shears
> Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears.

While Parliament and the Assembly were having sharp passages of arms on the subject of Church discipline and so forth, King Charles made his famous move, entering the camp of the Scottish army, and throwing himself boldly on the loyalty and sympathy of the Scots. There is no doubt that he hoped in this way to accentuate the divisions between the allies; but the demand of his new custodians that he should take the Covenant and abjure episcopacy was one he had no mind to comply with. He dealt artfully with them, however, to gain time, secretly intriguing with the French to send such Roman Catholic forces to his aid as would

enable him to reduce his victorious subjects to submission. The weary negotiations dragged on; with this effect, however, that the possession of the person of Charles had given a new advantage to the Presbyterian champions alike in Parliament and the Assembly. Moreover, the King went so far as to propose a compromise to the Presbyterians, by which their form of government should be established in about four-fifths of the whole kingdom, leaving to episcopacy only one-fifth, and the two ascendant bodies to agree to extirpate all "the superstitious sects and heresies of the Papists and Independents." It was a genial proposal, doubtless; but the Scottish Commissioners would have none of it, and probably by this time (September, 1646) the strength of the Independents was such that it could not be taken seriously. Charles was now subject to a double process of "squeezing." The Queen was urging him from France to get back to his throne by fully accepting the Presbyterian settlement, but retaining the headship of the army. The Commissioners were at him with more drastic proposals. His next suggested compromise was to consent to Presbytery for three years, and resign all power over the militia for ten years, he and his household to be allowed their own religious forms, and some forbearance to be conceded for "scruples of conscience." To the last clause he added an explanatory note for the eye of the Presbyterians only, to the effect that it was inserted so that the Independents might "relish" the proposal better, but if the Presbyterians demurred, he would go any lengths in denouncing the Independents! Verily, an ingenious and unstable monarch!

Charles was soon to know that his power was gone. Parliament had determined to pay off the Scottish army, and when this was done the custody of the King was

transferred to the Parliament, and he was lodged in Holmby House. He was now so completely at the mercy of the Commons that his resistance to the establishment of Presbyterian uniformity could not be very formidable. The only formidable obstacle left was the army, and by a vote of the Presbyterian majority in Parliament the army was to be disbanded, and then re-organised for service in Ireland. It was a clever little scheme, but the army had no intention of disbanding. In fact, the army conceived that it had fought and suffered not for Presbyterian ascendency but for freedom of conscience, and that until that issue was safe it was idle to talk about the laying down of arms. Rumour was constant that the King would give way, and the rule of the new presbyter be substituted for the rule of the old priest. The army was of one mind to prevent this "deal." By a daring master-stroke a certain Colonel Joyce with a handful of troopers seized the person of Charles at Holmby House and marched him away to the army, he being not on the whole unwilling to exchange his Presbyterian gaolers for his new captors. It was checkmate to Parliament. The army was fairly master of the situation, and terms could not now be arranged without them. Once again the pendulum had swung back, and the advantage lay with the Independents.

Charles had steadily evaded the propositions of the Presbyterians; he was now to hear the proposals of the army. These were characteristic. They included the abolition of all coercive power and authority of bishops and all other ecclesiastical officers "extending to any civil penalties upon any"; also the repeal of all Acts enforcing the Book of Common Prayer or attendance at church, *or prohibiting meetings for worship apart from the regular Church;* and there is to be no enforcing of the Covenant upon anyone. With these proposals were

bound up others concerning the restoration of the King, and the vexed question of the treatment of delinquents, which were truly magnanimous. Charles, however, had new hopes of getting back his own, and he rejected the "Heads of Proposals" somewhat contemptuously; and the old business of negotiation went on as before. The next sensation in the great drama was the escape of Charles to the Isle of Wight, where he threw himself upon the mercy of Colonel Hammond, Governor of Carisbrooke Castle, and from thence, while defying the army, he entered into an engagement with the Scots, accepting Presbytery unconditionally—save for himself and his household—and undertaking to see to the suppression of the Independents and other sects. At last Charles was to reap the result of his scheming. He had set his kingdom again by the ears. There were eruptions of royalism in various parts, and a large force of Scottish troops invaded England for the King. But they had reckoned without Cromwell. With a comparatively small army the latter flung himself upon the English and Scottish host at Preston, and annihilated them. Fairfax trampled out the rest of the insurrection, and Charles's chance of preserving his crown and even his life vanished for ever.

There is every evidence that in their negotiations with Charles on behalf of the army, Fairfax and Cromwell had been genuinely anxious to restore him to his throne, but as a Constitutional ruler. Slowly they had been forced to realise that not the best will in the world could save Charles. It was impossible to believe that his promise to the Scots was sincere. At every step he stood revealed as a man of invincible duplicity. When the second civil war broke out, the veterans of the New Model fastened on their armour once again and tramped off to the North to peril their lives in the old cause. But

SIR THOMAS FAIRFAX,

(From an old Engraving.)

before they set out their officers had taken an awful *sacrament*, using the word in its original sense of a military oath. The details have come down to us of what is, perhaps, the most fateful prayer-meeting ever held on English soil. It lasted for three days. The time was spent in sustained prayer and confession and searching introspection; and the culmination was in a resolution adopted with the utmost solemnity and unanimity. "That it was our duty, if ever the Lord brought us back again in peace, to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for that blood he had shed and mischief he had done to his utmost against the Lord's Cause and People in these poor Nations." In this fashion "we were led and helped to a clear agreement among ourselves, *not any dissenting*." So they took their "Sacrament," and went forth to the war. If anything were needed to convince the army that the cause of freedom henceforth depended upon them alone, it would be the fatuous proceedings in Parliament at the very outbreak of hostilities. "An ordinance for the suppression of blasphemies and hercsies" passed through both Houses as a disgraceful contribution to the statute law of England. Once again it was enacted that the person holding certain theological heresies was "to suffer the pains of death . . . without benefit of clergy," while imprisonment was to be the lot of those who professed "minor forms of religious error." These latter persons included Arminians, Baptists, Anti-Sabbatarians, and all who maintained "that the Church government by Presbytery is anti-Christian or unlawful." Well indeed might the army and its leaders ask the question whether the country had suffered the horrors of civil war that to this persecuting spirit might be granted a new lease of power and authority in the Kingdom. What must have been the reflections of Fairfax and Cromwell

as they led their men to the battle-field, knowing that, as Professor Masson puts it, Parliament had sent them there with a rope round their necks!

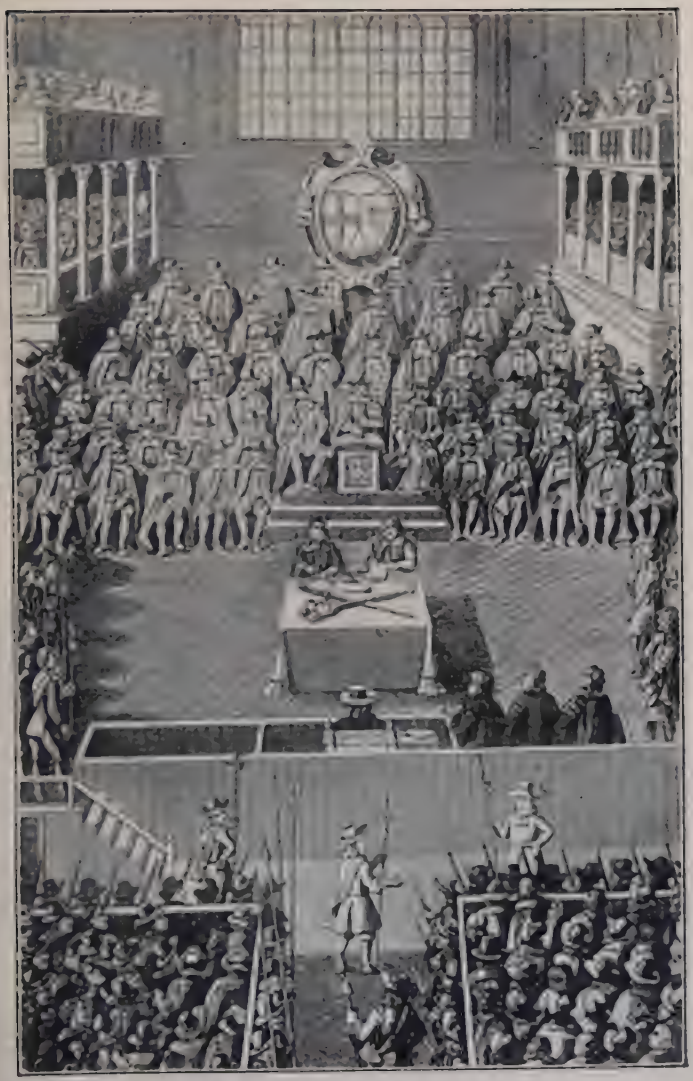
The campaign over, and the popular cause vindicated once again by their courage and heroism, means had to be devised for the carrying out of their solemn agreement. The first step was the publication of what was known as the Grand Remonstrance of the army. There seems to be no doubt that this famous document, with the two similar ones, the "*Heads of Proposals*" and "*The Agreement of the People of England*," was from the pen of that able and enthusiastic young officer, Henry Ireton, now Cromwell's son-in-law. The Remonstrance was an exposition of the great principle, "*Salus populi suprema lex*"—the safety of the people is the supreme law; and the conclusion of the whole matter was that to secure the public safety, Charles must be brought to justice. If "his coming in again were with a new and changed heart his person might be capable of pity." Once they had believed this possible, but long experience of Charles had undeceived them; and now there was no way out of England's distress but one way. As a sequel to the Grand Remonstrance, Fairfax proceeded to obtain possession of the person of Charles. This was easily done, and the King was taken first to Hurst Castle and subsequently to Windsor. It now remained to preserve such show of legal authority as was possible, and to secure a vote of the House of Commons. By this time the Presbyterians were aware of what was impending, and William Prynne and others were fulminating against the army and discovering surprising virtues and possibilities in the King. The army, however, had invented a drastic purge for application to Parliament. Colonel Pride, with a few stalwarts, was stationed at the door of Westminster Hall, to see that those members who passed in were well-

affected to the cause which the army represented. It was a rough remedy, only to be justified by the disorder of the time and the urgency of the crisis. The members who were admitted went through with their grim task, declaring in notable words that the people is the original of all just power in the English State: not kings, nor nobles, nor even Parliaments, but the people. This was their proud defence of proceedings that were indefensible on any other theory. A High Court of Justice was constituted, and before it Charles was arraigned in that he had "traitorously and maliciously levied war against the present Parliament and the people therein represented."

The verdict on such an accusation was inevitable. Indeed, it is fair criticism to say that his judges did not sit to try Charles, but to sentence him. They had condemned him in their thoughts long before. Yet there was a certain grim dignity about the proceedings. They did not meet for vengeance, but for justice, and they conceived that they were following the leading and executing the judgment of Heaven. It is to little purpose to argue that their proceedings were not legal. Charles was the last man in England who had a right to complain of that. There is an interesting retort on record made by Quin, the actor, to Bishop Warburton, who challenged him as to the execution of Charles. By what law, demanded the Bishop, do you justify his execution? "By all the laws that he had left them," was the actor's reply. Charles had played fast and loose with the laws and liberties of England; he had wilfully strained the prerogative; he had again and again thrown constitutionalism to the winds. He was the last man who had a right to complain that there was being measured to him again the measure he had meted out to others. The only law "that he had left

them" was the eternal law of righteousness in the hearts and consciences of his subjects; and it was by that law that he was tried, and under that law he was sentenced.

In the presence of death, the King recovered all his dignity, and fell back upon his noblest line of defence—his loyalty to the form of religion in which he had been nurtured. He was no longer driven by fate to conciliate Presbytery, or coquet with Catholicism. With the end of intrigue and duplicity came the opportunity for sincerity. The long day of craft and falsehood was about to close, and the one clear faith which Charles had never wholly forsworn, though he had cruelly compromised it, came back to be his support at the last. How bravely and royally he bore himself in that final scene at Whitehall we all know. Yet not less admirable than the bearing of Charles was the stern determination of his rugged conquerors that even by the blood of so illustrious a victim, and the consequent horror and consternation of the world, the rights of Englishmen should be vindicated and the liberties of religion guaranteed. For this they had fought and prayed and suffered, and on that scaffold at Whitehall on that frosty morning of the 30th of January, 1649, their "sacrament" was kept.



THE TRIAL OF CHARLES I.

(From an old Engraving.)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Days of the Commonwealth.

The days had come which the better part of England had vowed to see. How that vow was kept by those who made it we have seen in the last chapter. The unwritten resolve of every man who loved freedom to think and pray and worship had been that expressed in the lines of Blake :

> I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till I have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.

At last the weary pilgrimage was over, and the Promised Land lay at their feet. Victory was theirs ; but, as yet, not rest. They of the Parliament who were willing to take the oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth found the destinies of the country in their hands. Kingship had been abolished at one stroke of the pen—or of the axe—and the House of Lords fell to a single resolution. A Council of State was appointed for administration, and as Fairfax was something less than half-hearted, and had never formally defended the execution of Charles, everyone was soon to know that Oliver Cromwell was the soul of the Commonwealth. We need not concern ourselves with the civil history of these memorable days. But it behoved the Commonwealth to express its aims and ideals in the most public

fashion. This was done by means of the "Agreement of the People of England," one of the noblest and notablest manifestoes ever published. Its main terms of settlement were a single representative House based on the fairest possible distribution of members; biennial general elections, the vote to belong to every man of full age and a householder; lawyers elected to Parliament must continue practice during their Parliamentary trust; no member of Parliament to be appointed to any public office. And what about the ecclesiastical settlement? It is permitted to Parliament to establish and endow any form of Church not Popish or prelatic, but dissenters from the established form of worship are to be equally guaranteed liberty of conscience, though this is not *necessarily* to extend to Popery or prelacy. So far as the latter is concerned, the Parliament will need satisfaction as to their genuine loyalty to the Constitution. It may be said at once that the arrangement prefigured in the Agreement of the People was substantially adhered to through the Commonwealth and Protectorate. There was an Established Church comprehensive enough to include good men of very many varieties of ecclesiastical opinion; and there was wide toleration for the voluntaryists of every order. Of course, many of the more thoroughgoing of the latter objected to the Establishment on principle, and thought the Parliamentary leaders were bowing down in the House of Rimmon. Of such was John Lilburne, who had now become an out-and-out leveller, and was attacking the Parliament as incisively and mercilessly as he had attacked royalism. As for Parliament it was the mere "Rump" it was beginning to be called; and it was high time for a dissolution. But these early days were critical and anxious ones, and the best friends of republicanism had need of

patience. The Irish problem had to be tackled; for it is needless to say that Catholic Ireland was a menace to the Commonwealth, and certain recent horrible massacres of Protestants demanded punishment. At the very moment of the realisation of their hopes of rest, when they were preparing to hang up their swords and sit at their own firesides again, the veteran soldiers of Cromwell were compelled to cross the Irish Sea behind their indomitable leader for a short but bloody campaign that was to add another "distressful" chapter to the tragic history of that island. And as if that were not enough, almost before they could return, Scotland had begun to coquet with the young Charles. Even less scrupulous than his father, Charles was willing to take the Covenant, would, in fact, take any number of covenants, and swear allegiance to Presbytery. So the Scots received him back, as a prodigal son, with music and dancing interspersed with lectures on his father's errors and his own tendency to levity. Charles fooled them all to the top of their bent, and, with Scotland in arms for the Prince, there was nothing for it but for Oliver and his men to march northwards and deal with this new situation. How Cromwell broke the power of Scotland at Dunbar, and eventually pursued and destroyed Charles's army of Scots and English at Worcester, belongs to general history. These were sore days for the Kirk; for they were days when men and women not of their persuasion had equal liberty with themselves to preach and to worship. These were the beginnings of the Free Church spirit in Scotland, which has such noble expression in our day.

It ought to be chronicled that early in the Commonwealth days the Westminster Assembly of Divines held its 1,163rd sitting, and its last. Its Shorter and Larger Catechisms had, with modifications, received

the approval of Parliament. But its ideas of Church government and the duty and authority of the civil magistrate to enforce Church decrees were already obsolete. While the Assembly had been debating, England, at all events, had moved on, and the Assembly's belated arguments and propositions seemed like the dreary echoes of a bygone age. Not so in Scotland. North of the Tweed was complete uniformity. As Professor Masson says : "Not a man, not a woman, not a child, not a dog, not a rabbit all over Scotland but belonged to the Kirk." It was this grim solidarity, enforced by "a skilled police," and a whole army of ecclesiastical detectives, that was rudely broken up by Cromwell's sword. Henceforth Scotland was incorporated absolutely in the United Kingdom, or rather Commonwealth, and she, too, must accept the fundamental privilege of liberty. Hard days for the anti-tolerationists these !

Our chronicle would also be unpardonably defective if it did not set forth the appointment of Mr. John Milton to be Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth. John Milton, at the call of public duty, lays aside for many years his purely literary interests, strains his eyes in the service of the State until blindness creeps upon him, but nevertheless gives tongue to the will of Cromwell in his dealings with foreign powers, and finds time to write, in English as well as in Latin, books that will always live, for the glowing spirit of patriotism and freedom that is in them.

The country was now to know that toleration was no synonym for a Laodicean and tepid interest in the cause of religion. On the contrary, no government was so eager as this to promote the religious well-being, not only of England, but of the world. An Act was passed "for the promoting and propagating of the

CROMWELL, MILTON AND MARVELL.

(From the Picture by Ford Madox Brown.)

Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England." This Act was the outcome of the interest excited by the noble apostolic work of John Eliot, whose right to the title "the first Protestant missionary" is now generally allowed. Eliot, with so many others, had been driven out of England by the harsh measures against Puritanism. It was in 1631 that he landed in Boston, and soon after began a life ministry at the Congregational Church at Rothbury. He was so much affected by what he saw of the condition of the Indians that he learned their language and constituted himself their friend, champion, and evangelist. The first Bible printed in America was Eliot's translation of the Bible into Indian dialect. His labours for the social well-being of the Indians were not less conspicuous than his efforts for their religious enlightenment. This was the sort of man Cromwell and his coadjutors delighted to honour and help; and we are not surprised that one of John Eliot's books should bear a dedication to Cromwell. It must not be supposed that the Government was indifferent to the duty of propagating the Gospel at home. A committee was appointed, in response to the petition of certain Independent ministers with the Rev. John Owen at their head, to consider how the Gospel might best be propagated in the homeland. One of the difficulties was to get rid of notoriously unfit and "scandalous" ministers, and have their places filled by "godly" preachers and pastors. The chief proposal of the committee was that a roving commission should be appointed to deal with these cases. It is carefully set forth that nobody who "scruples attendance" at churches, or partaking of the Sacrament, is to be compelled to do so. But everyone should have some place of worship; and there are fifteen "fundamentals" of Christianity that are not to be spoken against.

These latter proposals, as might be expected, were responsible for some fierce criticisms; and Cromwell's voice is heard in words that must have gone far to reassure any who were fearful of every new test. "He had rather that Mahometanism were permitted amongst us than that one of God's children should be persecuted." Still the Voluntaryists are neither inactive nor uninfluential. Roger Williams is over here on a roving visit, rejoicing, on the whole, at the turn things have taken in England, and declaring that "New England is becoming old and Old England is becoming new." He does what he can to strengthen the backbone of voluntaryism, and speed the agitation against tithes. Is it not clear, too, that John Milton is on his side? His sonnet to Cromwell, while full of reverence and enthusiasm, has this plea in it:

> Help us to save free conscience from the paw
> Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.

Evidently he is afraid lest State endowments shall mean hireling wolves rather than voluntary shepherds. Yet it has been noted that the Church of England had now been so far redeemed from the taint of sectionalism and made so largely catholic and representative that even that aggressive voluntaryist, John Goodwin, of Coleman-street, is not unwilling to give the experiment a chance, and lend a favouring hand. This will be, perhaps, a convenient place to set the reader on terms of better acquaintanceship with John Goodwin. He fairly earned his place in the history of English freedom, not only by founding one of the earliest Free Churches in London, but also by an intrepid advocacy of Arminianism in an age when the tenets of the Freedom of Grace and the Universality of the Christian Redemption were esteemed the most pestilent of heresies. It has been said that

John Goodwin "made more noise in the world than any other person of his age, rank, and profession." Educated at Cambridge, he had been presented to the living of St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, as early as 1633. He is an example of a decided Puritan, who, nevertheless, survived the rule of Laud, only to fall a victim to the doctrinal intolerance of the Presbyterians. This is accounted for by his Arminian principles, which Laud favoured. The Presbyterians could not tolerate so notorious a heretic, and John Goodwin was ejected from his vicarage. He now formed an Independent Church in Coleman-street, and preached there more or less regularly until his death. Goodwin was "ever a fighter," and in theological and political matters alike wielded a very powerful pen, though, like his far greater contemporary, Milton, he was not guiltless of some scurrilous writing. His adversaries did not spare him. The title-page of one book contains John Goodwin's picture with a windmill over it and a weather-cock upon it, the devil lustily blowing the sails, and all "to show the instability of the man." He was a thorough-going friend of Cromwell, and defended the execution of Charles in a famous pamphlet entitled "The Obstructors of Justice," which went near to undo him at the Restoration. He did not like Cromwell's system of "Triers," however, to examine candidates for the ministry, and called them "tormentors." At the Restoration he was passed over, probably because of his Arminianism, and he continued to preach at Coleman Street till he died. The ability and earnestness with which he maintained the Arminian position in the teeth of great unpopularity approve him a true pioneer in a liberal theological movement of far-reaching consequences.

It is certain that Cromwell never resented the criti-

cisms on his policy that came from the extreme voluntary and disestablishment men. There is every reason to believe that his heart was with them. But he knew that his immediate business was to keep things together and avoid anything like disintegration in the State. His always tolerant mind leaned to compromise and accommodation, provided that the central principle of religious liberty was not denied. He found in existence the vast machinery of an Established Church, with all its edifices and endowments, and he believed that he could make it an illustration rather than a negation of what was meant by freedom of conscience. Men like Roger Williams, Milton, and to a large extent Goodwin, regretted what they believed to be a declension from the nobler ideal. It may be said in a sentence that while Cromwell's policy was the best for the immediate exigency, Milton had the future on his side. Neither is there any reason to doubt that in this respect Cromwell was a great opportunist, and that he did not abandon his earlier ideal, though he knew that its full realisation must be in the future rather than the present.

Cromwell's dissolution of the Parliament which refused to dissolve itself has created more indignation and surprise in later years than it created at the time, when it was welcomed with relief as a disagreeable but inevitable step. The new Parliament was known in history as the Barebones Parliament from the prominence in its debates of a Fleet Street leather-seller and preacher known as Praise-God Barebones, much given to exhortation at conventicles and now exercising his gifts in a more public fashion. This Parliament was by no means a barren one, and much good work was done. The Protectorate fairly established, Cromwell had a freer hand than ever to deal with the difficult problems of the State. Certain

JOHN OWEN.

ministers were much about his person, and admitted freely to his confidence—Hugh Peters, of course, and with him John Owen, and later on John Howe. The reader should learn to give to Owen and Howe a prominent place in his annals of the time. A very brief sketch is all we have room for here.

John Owen gave early proof of the staunchness of his Nonconformist convictions, for he was driven out of Oxford by Laud, and disinherited by the uncle who had educated him. He came first to London, but afterwards exercised his ministry at Forsham and at Coggeshall. He was a man of massive and vigorous intellect, a strong Calvinist, but with an eminently tolerant spirit. He accompanied Cromwell on his campaigns in Ireland and Scotland, and in 1651 became Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and Vice-Chancellor of the University. Closely associated with him in his Oxford career was Thomas Goodwin, who had been made President of Magdalen College. Anthony Wood calls these two "The Atlases and Patriarchs of Independency." The friendship between Owen and Cromwell waned after a time. There is no doubt that Owen was too much concerned for credal uniformity to satisfy Cromwell's more catholic spirit. The theological works, however, that Owen published were justly valued at the time. Though they are strongly Calvinistic, there is the deep spirit of humanity in them which distinguished the nobler exponents of Calvinism.

John Howe is one of the finest and most gracious figures of Puritan times. His Cambridge life threw him among the men known as Cambridge Platonists, Cudworth, and Henry More, and John Smith. Going on from Cambridge to Oxford he became the friend of Theophilus Gale. His large and liberal spirit was not incompatible with strong positive convictions, but it

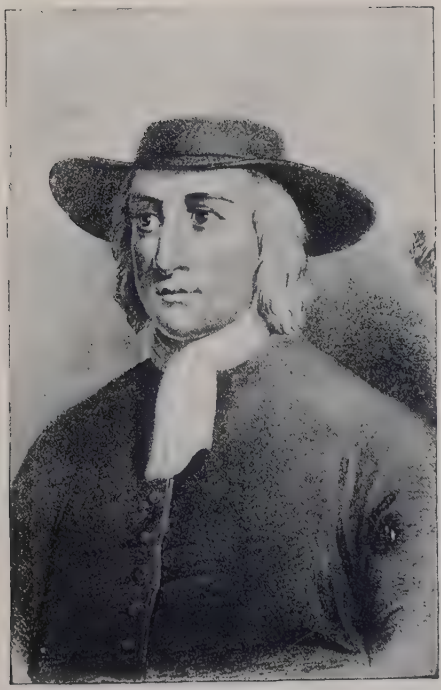
lifted him above the bitterness and narrowness which disfigured much of the controversy of the age. Many of his happiest and most fruitful years were spent in his quiet pastorate at Great Torrington, in Devonshire, but on a casual visit to London, Cromwell's discernment singled him out as a man of unique character and spirit; and greatly to Howe's disquietude he found himself appointed chaplain to the Court at Whitehall. He filled this office till after Cromwell's death, his influence upon the Protector and his circle being very marked. After the Restoration he suffered much from the intolerance of the Act of Uniformity; but he lived to write his great book, "The Living Temple," and to be loved and honoured by all who know how to estimate true worth and personal saintliness.

It was Cromwell's misfortune that he could not always inspire his subordinates with his own liberal spirit. There were harsh cases of eviction from livings which excited much prejudice and rankled with those who had long memories for the faults of the Protectorate. One of Cromwell's devices for governing the country was to divide it up into districts and set a Major-General over each, with large powers. Military government is almost as apt to be harsh and arbitrary as clerical government, and not all Cromwell's restraining influence could prevent abuses of authority. Similarly, in regard to what was known as the system of Triers. These were examiners whose duty it was to determine who were and who were not fit to exercise their ministry in the Church. The Triers expelled for misconduct and incompetence, and insisted on some capacity for preaching and character for piety in those whom they appointed to livings. Richard Baxter, who certainly did not love Cromwell and was predisposed to find fault with his ecclesiastical arrangements frankly declared that the device worked

well, and fulfilled the intention of its authors in raising the intellectual and moral standard of the ministry. One is glad to know that such staunch and worthy Episcopalians and Royalists as old Thomas Fuller, "satisfied the examiners" and were secured in their livings. The Triers, moreover, seem to have recognised no disqualification in a candidate's peculiar convictions as to Church order and ritual. Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Independents, all held pastorates in Cromwell's established Church. How many Baptists became rectors or vicars we do not know, but we do know that there were several. On the whole, singular harmony and healthy co-operation prevailed among the various ministers within the Establishment. In addition, Dissent of various kinds had perfect liberty to organise itself according to its several preferences. The hand of the government was heaviest on the High-Churchmen. They were notoriously ill-affected to the Commonwealth—Stuartists and disciples of Archbishop Laud. As advocates themselves of arbitrary power in the Church they had perhaps least cause to complain, but there were many hard cases of exclusion from office among them. They were not imprisoned or ill-treated. Their only other cause of complaint was that Oliver had armed himself with authority to prevent their having tutorial work. But it was Cromwell's way to arm himself with weapons that he had no intention of using unless serious emergencies arose. On the whole, the policy of the Commonwealth was fair, tolerant, and prosperous throughout the realm, and the character and Protestant sincerity of the Protector made the name and influence of Britain great throughout the world. It was directly in line with his home policy that he should instruct Milton to write despatches urging liberty of conscience upon the rulers of Spain and France. It was inevitable that he should be

the first and boldest in Europe to insist that the cruel massacres of God's "slaughtered saints" among the Piedmontese should cease, and justice be done to the suffering survivors. We have seen his zeal for the propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians. Throughout the story of his great and glorious rule there throbs this passion for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and for what one may truly call "the good estate of the Catholic Church"—for the Church of England has never been more truly Catholic than in Cromwell's day. Even Baxter was constrained to say of him, "It was the principal means that henceforward he trusted to for his own establishment, even by *doing good*, that the people might love him, or at least be willing to have his government for that good." And again, in a letter to John Howe, he writes, "The Lord Protector is noted as a man of a Catholic spirit, desirous of the unity and peace of all the servants of Christ."

The religious movement, however, which caused Oliver more serious perplexity than any other was the extraordinary revival associated with the life and labours of George Fox. In a very real sense he was the greatest of the Voluntaryists. That John Lilburne in his latest days should find satisfaction in the teaching and practice of the Quakers was not at all unnatural. Fox went beyond Milton in his denunciation of "hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw"; he denounced a paid ministry altogether. It was a long step, doubtless, beyond Milton, but it was not an unnatural development of Milton's voluntaryism. Take the great passage in which Milton appeals to Cromwell: "If you leave the Church to the Church and discreetly rid yourself and the magistracy of that burden, actually half of the whole and at the same time most incompatible with the rest, not allowing two powers of utterly



GEORGE FOX.

(From the Portrait by Fairyland.
Photographed by J. Milner Lester, Harrow.)

diverse natures, the Civil and the Ecclesiastical, to commit fornication together, and by their promiscuous and delusive helps apparently to strengthen but in reality to weaken and finally subvert each other; if also you take away all persecuting power from the Church—for persecuting power will never be absent so long as money, the poison of the Church, the strangler of truth, shall be extorted by force from the unwilling as a pay for preaching the Gospel—then you will have cast out of the Church those money-changers that truckle not with doves, but with the Dove itself, the Holy Ghost."

This passage is the sheet-anchor of the Liberationist, and it cannot, of course, be said to support the Quaker view of the ministry. But it pointed in the direction of the testimony of the Quakers that a paid ministry in Christ's Church was a grievous apostasy from primitive Christianity.

It will hardly be disputed that among all the teachers and reformers of the seventeenth century the most *original* was George Fox. If Milton was the poet of that Puritan age, George Fox was its prophet. He had the spiritual insight and the intense moral passion of the prophet—something also of his narrowness and intolerance. The genuineness and spontaneity of his religious utterances were very striking and refreshing in an age when the well-worn phraseology of Calvinism had grown stale with repetition. To say that Fox was original is to say that he went straight to the springs and sources of life, thought out his own message in his own way, owing little to any except the great Teacher, the ever-present Spirit. So it came to pass that his religious vocabulary was singularly rich and quaint. It was, in fact, experience coined into speech. No theological school could claim him, for he belonged to none. He

was of that small circle of elect souls of whom it can be said that they have distinct spiritual genius. It was his rare gift of getting to the heart of things, going back to the beginnings, drinking in Christianity at its pure and limpid fount, that made him so unique a figure then, and keeps him so unique a figure still. Formalism, ecclesiastical and theological, he hated with a perfect hatred. Nor can it be denied that he had the defect of this quality. He was volcanic, passionate, censorious, too fond of sweeping condemnations, too scornful of habits and opinions that were not his. He had too little sense of proportion and perspective ; and by exalting trifles into principles was in some cases responsible for a pedantry and formalism similar in effect to that which he denounced. Yet, when all due criticism has been made, the fact remains that his was a singularly emancipated spirit ; that the dead hand of traditionalism and literalism never hampered or oppressed him ; and that his thoughts, his language, his methods, and his life were emphatically his own.

Puritanism, so far, had been almost exclusively a protest against ceremonialism and sacramentarianism—the formalism of Whitgift and Laud. Puritanism in George Fox and his friends became a noble protest against the formalism that had come in with the triumph of Calvinism. The intolerable Rabbinical sermons, the logical and theological hair-splittings, the idolatries of forms of doctrine as well as forms of worship, all these things Fox felt to be a corruption of the simplicity and freedom of the Gospel as fatal in their effects as the corruptions of Anglicanism itself. Almost alone in his generation George Fox saw the tendency of this cast-iron rabbinism to harden and despiritualise its professors. From his youth up the days of Fox were bound each to each in natural piety. " When I came to eleven years

of age," he says, "I knew pureness and righteousness." He had no early paroxysms of doubt and acute spiritual distress. His misery was less for himself than for his age—an age in which brother was at war with brother, and the peace of Christ would seem to have forsaken the land. I say "*seem* to have forsaken," for, little as George Fox knew it, there was more genuine love of man behind the sword of Cromwell than in all the milk and honey of the Restoration.

George Fox found that the message delivered to him by the ordinary religious counsellors of the people was no more than stones to the hungry. We may admit this without condemning them. It did not demonstrate their incompetence that they had so little to offer him. There are mystic souls that must be fed if at all out of invisible resources, and receive their manna direct from the authentic heavens. They have bread to eat that other men know not of. George Fox had, as he used to say, "great openings." He saw vistas of truth opening out before him as he pondered over the Scriptures. "I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the Infinite Love of God; and I had great openings."

The two peculiarities of Fox and his Quaker followers, as they were called, which brought them into conflict with the magistrates, were first their refusal to take an oath, and secondly their refusal to remove their hats as a mark of respect. So far as the former is concerned, most Free Churchmen have come to sympathise with the Society of Friends. But we must not forget how critical the times were, and in what real jeopardy the constitution stood. All who refused to take the oath of allegiance exposed themselves to the charge of disloyalty; and, moreover, magistrates were not accustomed to

the idea that a man might dislike the form of an oath whose purpose was not to avoid telling the truth thereby. Fox's saying on the subject is famous: "The world saith, Kiss the Book, but the Book saith, Kiss the Son lest He be angry. And the Son saith, Swear not at all, but let your communications be Yea, yea, for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." As to the second point, the removal of the hat, it identified Fox with the Levellers, and the disciples of absolute equality; but it will hardly be denied that, as one of Fox's biographers admits, "it belongs to the category of the infinitely little." Fox was laying stress on a mere form, and confounding the courtesies of society with the sacred and regal claims of religion. The refusal to remove the hat looked to the magistrates of the Commonwealth like a deliberate and studied insult, and it is fair to say this impression was not always removed by the language which the early Quakers used towards "the powers that be." Hundreds of Fox's followers were imprisoned up and down the country, not for the form of religion they preferred, nor for their attack on the established form, but for contempt of Court in refusing to take the oath or to uncover the head. Others were proceeded against under the vagrancy laws, because as roving evangelists they had the temerity to follow the example of the early Christian apostles.

It is difficult for us to-day, who have learned to associate the Society of Friends with the gentleness that maketh great, an intense but quiet earnestness, and even an undue respect for propriety, to conceive the vehemence of speech and the wild extravagances of conduct which marked the days of its origin. Disturbances of public worship, and denunciations of "hireling, tithe-paid priests" were everywhere common. George Fox's extraordinary ravings against the city of Lich-

field were probably due in part to a mind disordered by sufferings in prison, and in part to the horrors of the Civil War. But his example was imitated by many whose faults were not redeemed by Fox's nobility of soul. Irritation at "railing accusations" of this kind was universal; and it deepened into intense indignation owing to certain scandalous instances of indecency and blasphemy. With the extravagances of these latter Fox and his more responsible followers were in nowise concerned. No great revival has been without such excrescences. When James Nayler declared himself to be "the Everlasting Son, the Prince of Peace, the Fairest among Ten Thousand and the Altogether Lovely," there was evidence enough to make his confinement in an asylum desirable, but none to justify his being put in a pillory and having his tongue bored with a red-hot iron. This was the punishment awarded to him by Parliament, aghast at the blasphemy; and further cruelties were in store for him when Cromwell interfered. The Protector's clear expression of dissent from the proposals did not save Nayler, who was again abominably punished; but it was only the fact that Cromwell did not see his way at the time to have an open breach with his Parliament that gave the persecutors of poor mad Nayler their advantage. "One while," says Baxter, in recording some incident of the Quaker revival, "divers of them went naked through divers chief towns and cities of the land as a prophetical act." He goes on to say how he himself was "bawled at" as a "hireling, deceiver, false prophet, dog," and this "frequently in the congregation." Cromwell's arm was long, his heart large, but he could not save those whose misfortune it was that the spiritual movement they represented was thus brought into contempt by fanatics. Yet he did what he could. He

had met Fox in 1654, and had been greatly attracted to him. As they were parting Fox says, "He caught me by the arm, and with tears in his eyes, said, 'Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour of a day together we should be nearer one to another,'" and added, "that he wished him no more ill than he did to his own soul." By Cromwell's intervention Fox and his companions were released from Launceston Gaol in 1656; and his influence was frequently exercised to modify the inclemency of the magistrates. Nevertheless the fact remains that there were seldom less than a thousand Quakers in prison during the years of the Protectorate. Such was the violence of the authorities against them.

If we consider the days in which this wonderful movement began, the bravest Quaker testimony of all was the testimony as to the unlawfulness of war. It could not be expected that a nation that was winning so hardly its liberties by the sword would listen patiently to such a message. But this very fact, while it shows us yet another reason for the animus against the Quakers, extorts our warmest admiration for their courage and fidelity to what they believed the truth. The Independent had yet to learn that even Liberty, if she depends for her maintenance upon the sword, is destined to disappear; and that the kingdom of heaven cannot be established by force of arms. The Quaker stood in an age of strife and bloodshed advocating the weapons of light rather than might, of sweet reasonableness and moral suasion rather than sword and pike, of arbitration rather than war. In taking such a stand he is not a less heroic figure than the Ironside who died at Marston Moor or Naseby in a death-grapple with absolutism.

The organisation of the followers of George Fox into

a society went on steadily from the very early days of this great awakening. It appears from his own statement that "the first meeting" "gathered in the name of Jesus" was at a place called Sedbergh in Yorkshire in 1652. Few scenes in the ministry of George Fox can have transcended in interest and impressiveness those that took place at what was known as Firebank Chapel at Sedbergh. The chapel stood, we are told, "on the summit of a conical hill," while the drear moorland stretches away on every side for miles. Near the chapel there rose "a huge rock" with a spring of water at the base of it. This rock became Fox's pulpit. Won by the marvellous power of the young prophet, many hundreds of people had flocked across the moors, and now stood enchained at the foot of the rock. For three hours George Fox preached to them. Such was his persuasiveness, and such the power of the Spirit present in him, that almost the whole congregation was convinced. It appears that two Independent congregations and their preachers went over bodily to the new society. The phenomenon of Sedbergh was repeated in many parts of the kingdom. In Bristol and in London great things were done. In the latter city the unfortunate James Nayler, until his mind gave way, was followed everywhere by vast crowds. Many of the Court resorted to him. Sir Harry Vane was a frequent hearer. About 1656 a General Meeting "out of several counties, concerning the affairs of the Church," was established. "Travelling ministers" had to be supported—clothed, fed, and provided with Bibles, the last still a difficult and expensive matter. In each meeting lists were carefully prepared of "members entitled to transact the business of the Church." As for the General Meeting, its character may be gathered from Fox's own account. He tells us how "divers justices

and captains had come to break it up, but when they understood the business Friends had met about, and saw Friends' books and accounts, and collections for relief of the poor, how we took care—one county to help another—and to help our Friends beyond the sea and provide for our poor, that none of them should be chargeable to their parishes, &c., the justices and officers confessed that we did their work, and would pass away peaceably and lovingly," "commending Friends' practice." When we remember how all this went on through a veritable hurricane of obloquy and hostility; that in the teeth of persecution the Friends quietly and steadfastly proceeded with the work of building up their spiritual fellowship, one feels that there is here before us one of the very noblest pages in Christian history.

Space must be spared for just a word as to the case of John Biddle, the Unitarian. Biddle had fortunately escaped from the hands of the Long Parliament by Cromwell's dissolution of that body. But the news got abroad that "in the new meeting-house at Paul's, commonly called Captain Chillingdon's church meeting-place, John Biddle did then and there, in the presence of about 500 persons, maintain, some hours together, in a dispute that Jesus Christ was not the Almighty or Most High God." It can be imagined what indignation this would provoke. Yet certain Independent and Baptist ministers, "whose orthodoxy was above suspicion," made themselves very active to protect Biddle from serious injury. They drew upon themselves, as was inevitable, much abuse; but they stood their ground, and Cromwell saved Biddle by removing him to "the Isle of Scilly," and there confining him, granting him an allowance of a hundred crowns per annum. Biddle employed his

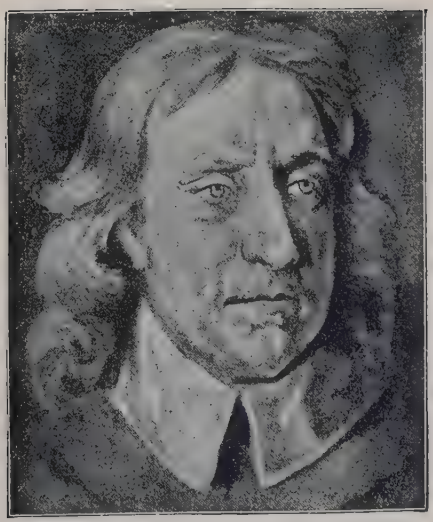
leisure in writing a treatise against the doctrine of the Fifth Monarchy.

The one considerable denominational event that occurred in the latter days of the Protectorate was the convoking of a Synod of all the Congregational Churches of England and Wales, to be held at the Savoy on the 29th September, 1658. The main purpose of the Synod was to be to draw up a confession of faith representative of the common beliefs of these Churches. This was not to be such a confession as would serve for a State creed in the Established Church of Cromwell. It was only a "voluntary agreement" of the Congregationalists. It was to be an exposition of what was generally believed among them; but it was not intended for use as a test. The very fact that such Synod was convoked points to a distinct growth of the denominational and communal spirit among the Independents. But, alas, before the date of the assembling of the Synod the greatest of the Independents was no more.

The labours of Hercules had broken down even the iron frame of the Protector. During the last year or two he had been more and more solitary. He felt keenly the alienation of some of his old comrades who thought and said that he took too much upon himself. Some who expected special favouritism for their opinions were angered by his very fairness and catholicity. But he went stoutly on his way; and the name and fame of England were indeed great throughout the world. Never had there been, either, such security and prosperity at home. What all this had meant for Cromwell it is impossible to conceive. And domestic bereavements had come upon him, many and sore. One of his sons, Oliver, had fallen in the war. "It went to my heart like a dagger, indeed it did," he said.

Then Ireton, the brave, beloved Ireton, his favourite son-in-law, died of "plague fever" in Ireland. Finally the daughter Elizabeth, for whom he had an especial tenderness, was stricken down; and secluding himself from all cares of State, he sat by her bedside holding her hand hour after hour. When she died, he was a broken man. He took up the old burdens of State—but wearily. George Fox, meeting him, felt "a waft of death go forth against him." Next day he was taken ill, and the end soon came. His last prayer was for his enemies, "waiting to trample on the dust of a poor worm." "They also, O Lord, are all thy children," pleaded the dying man. On the anniversary of the "crowning mercies," the battles of Worcester and Dunbar, Oliver Cromwell passed to his rest.

It is unnecessary to record in detail the events that led up to the Restoration of Charles II. to the throne. The artfulness and the unscrupulousness of General Monk were the appropriate instruments of the revolution. It was Monk who used the very army that had established the Commonwealth to overthrow it. It was Monk who brought about a co-operation between the Presbyterians and the Royalists which made Charles's Restoration certain. The dupes of Monk's plausibilities, the Presbyterian party, voted the return of the King, and so brought upon themselves in due course the inevitable bitter disillusionment which in English history has always awaited those who have trusted the word of a Stuart.



OLIVER CROMWELL.

(From the Portrait in Sidney Sussex College.)

CHAPTER IX.

The Downfall of Puritanism.

The story of the Restoration is best gathered from the chronicles of two eye-witnesses—the diary of Samuel Pepys and the autobiography of Richard Baxter. Pepys fascinates us with the picturesque details of those delirious days; while Baxter's narrative is the work of a man who kept his head throughout and had an eye for the issues involved. The Royalist saw in Charles the son of the Martyr, and one who himself had endured undeserved suffering in exile and as a fugitive. The Presbyterian saw in him the Prince who had taken the Covenant, swearing so handsomely to extirpate prelacy and establish Presbytery. Little wonder that Episcopalian and Presbyterian vied with each other in the extravagance of their welcome. On his landing thousands flocked round "to kiss the hem of his garment." There were acclamations and carousals "beyond imagination"; and when Charles declared, as he received the gift of a Bible from the Mayor and Aldermen of Dover, that "it was the thing that he loved above all things in the world," the enthusiasm knew no bounds. When we remember that Charles was all the while a "crypto-Catholic," and that his immoralities were already notorious, we are fully prepared for the nemesis that was to follow. For the present, however, outside the ranks of the grim old

Ironsides, soon to be disbanded, there was one demonstration of welcome. The bards outdid themselves in the effusiveness of their loyalty. Abraham Cowley, who had profited by Cromwell's patronage, exclaimed :

> Come, mighty Charles, desire of nations, come !

And Dryden, whose "Heroic Stanzas Consecrated to the Memory of his Highness Oliver" had been so recently printed, now sang of Naseby as "England's shame" and stigmatised those whose "crimes" betrayed the "just cause" of Charles. It would be difficult to find in the history of the world an example of a retribution so complete as that which overwhelmed the so-called Presbyterian party within a couple of years of the Restoration. Even those who are tempted to be most indignant at their ingratitude for the liberty they enjoyed under the Commonwealth cannot refuse them some tribute of pity for the bitterness of their disenchantment. They had taken the precaution to send a deputation to Charles at Breda to receive from him some substantial assurances that he would respect their rights and liberties. They found him as polite and accommodating as ever. "We do declare a Liberty to Tender Consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom, and that we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to Us for the full granting that Indulgence." This was sufficiently vague, but then, argued the misguided Presbyterians, it was on the faith of Charles the Covenanter, and was that not assurance enough ? So the anti-prelatic Stuartists tossed up their hats for Charles like the rest. Prynne, our old friend, hideous with mutilation, but still very much

alive, was now foremost in his zeal for hunting down and butchering the regicides and those who had expressed sympathy with the Commonwealth. Several of the judges of Charles were hanged, drawn, and quartered at Charing Cross, and with them Hugh Peters, Cromwell's famous chaplain. He had suffered some disquietude of mind when the horrible sentence was first pronounced, but died undismayed and very constant in his principles. Indeed, those who were put to death suffered with manhood, and with no sign of remorse. Sir Harry Vane, too, who was beheaded later, was staunch and undaunted, witnessing for his republicanism on the scaffold. At the earnest solicitations of powerful friends John Milton was spared to write "Paradise Lost" and "Samson Agonistes." But many other Independents, such as John Goodwin and Philip Nye, suffered minor penalties. It is clear that the Presbyterian party was not one whit behind the Episcopalian party in the satisfaction with which it drove out the Independents from State and Church. Their reward began to appear when ten of their number including Richard Baxter, were appointed Court chaplains. The appointments were never intended to be other than nominal. Only four were ever asked to preach, and they were not called upon to repeat the performance. Neither did any of them receive a penny by way of salary. But we may well ask, What had these men to do with the Court of Charles? They had a real concern for purity of morals, and there was hardly a considerable member of that Court with whose name some notorious scandal was not associated. In bringing back Charles they had inaugurated an era of libertinism. This must soon have become mournfully apparent to them, but they continued to believe that the Church compromise would work all right. Bishops

were to be re-appointed; that was now certain; but the innocent Presbyterians had come to believe that they would be no more than presidents of synods, and that the liturgy and other ceremonies would be optional. Baxter gives us in great detail the account of certain conferences held with the King and Chancellor Hyde. In these conferences Baxter played a very manly part. He used the current phrase "the late usurpers" to describe Cromwell and his coadjutors, but he extolled their work in the Church, nevertheless, and prayed the King not to undo the good that had been done merely because Cromwell had done it. The King was most conciliatory, and spoke of a *via media* in Church affairs with such apparent sincerity that the Rev. Simeon Ashe—innocent soul!—burst into tears of joy. Baxter, however, was uneasy in his mind; and his solicitude was not diminished by a response of the Episcopalians to overtures for compromise made by the Presbyterian ministers after conference at Sion College. The former took a very high line indeed, and made it clear that if the Presbyterian element was to be included in the Church at all it could only be by toleration and gracious condescension. To those who believed that they represented the true Reformed Church of England, this was a bitter pill to swallow. Yet the Presbyterians had now become, with few exceptions, moderate Episcopalians. Baxter, indeed, calls the term Presbyterianism an "odious name," and he and his friends were prepared to accept a liturgy, and a modified episcopate, for the sake of peace. They were still addressing Charles in sincere if fulsome fashion, telling him how in the search for Unity and Peace their eyes had been directed to him "as the person born to be under God the centre of their concord." But they had set forth their judgment that "the common Prayer-book is guilty of great

defectiveness, disorder, and vain repetitions, and therefore unfit to be the common imposed Frame of Worship to the God of Order." Charles, on his part, had already disavowed the Covenant, and protested that he asked forgiveness for ever having taken it. He had declared that the bishops, deans, chapters, &c., must be restored to their former authority; and that a liturgy was necessary "for the preservation of unity and uniformity," though he hinted at modifications of the existing one. He now defended the ceremonies of the Church, though still holding to an indulgence to some who misliked them. To such "little stature" had the hopes of the Presbyterians shrunk. Even yet, however, they can have had no conception of what was to follow. The time would come when they might even envy Hugh Peters the death which he bore so bravely by reason of an untroubled mind and an unaccusing conscience.

The Presbyterians in England were not alone in their disquietude. That Charles had violently disavowed the Covenant, and asked the pardon of heaven for having sworn agreement to that sacrosanct document, was news to turn the hearts of loyal Presbyterian Scotland to stone. How Baillie and his friends had rejoiced when the arch-tolerationist Cromwell and his rule had disappeared! Yet the fact remained that under Cromwell they had had every liberty, with only the unwelcome necessity of granting liberty to others. They had greeted the covenanter Charles with almost hysterical enthusiasm; and now he had repudiated the Covenant and re-established prelacy in England. Poor Baillie! He too, will have much to learn of the unwisdom of putting his trust in princes. Charles had pledged his royal word to Scotch representatives that "he wou'd preserve our religion as it was settled in Scotland entirely to us." Whereupon the said repre-

sentatives had pronounced him to be "the man of God's right hand who will refresh the hearts of all lovers of Zion." There had followed a letter from Charles explicitly promising to protect and preserve the government of the Church of Scotland as it is settled by law." How could the Covenanters be expected to know that Charles's promises were not worth the paper they were written on? The Scottish Parliament of 1661 gave evidence enough of the turn which events were taking. The Covenant was openly slighted; and its renewal forbidden. It must have been with hearts loaded with many apprehensions that Scotch and English Presbyterians joined in the rejoicings over the coronation which took place at this time. While Charles was having his "sacred person" anointed with oil in Westminster Abbey, and receiving the crown on his royal head, the heads of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, were exposed on poles outside Westminster Hall, and their bodies were rotting in a pit underneath the gallows at Tyburn. After the coronation the new Parliament met, intensely Royalist and Anglican, and their first decision was that the Solemn League and Covenant should be burned by the common hangman. England may now be said to have effectually repudiated her past.

We have now come in our history to that epoch-making event which, while it narrowed the Church of England to the compass of a single sect, enlarged and consolidated English Nonconformity. The new Parliament, in the exuberance of its loyalty, and flushed with the sense of power to take revenge on those who had broadened the base of the Church of England, got to work at once. The spirit of the Government was seen in the hanging, drawing and quartering of a preacher of the "Seventh-Day Baptist" denomination, John James by name. He was accused of treason

and barbarously executed thus. Then followed "The Corporations Act." According to this Act every civic and municipal officer had to renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, and take the following oath: "I do declare and believe that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever to take arms against the King, and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him." Also every magistrate must have taken the sacrament "according to the rites of the Church of England" within a year of his election. It was not only the Nonconformist minister who was to suffer, but the Nonconformists in every sphere of life. An Act against the Quakers followed. Anyone refusing to take any oath, and any Quakers meeting for worship to the number of five or more would be first fined £5, then £10, and then imprisoned with hard labour. These two samples of the bigotry of Parliament were only preliminary to that sublime effort of folly and intolerance, the celebrated Act of Uniformity, the date of which is May 19, 1662. By this Act every minister of the Church of England was compelled on "some Lord's Day before the Feast of Saint Bartholomew" to make this public declaration: "I do here declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled 'The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England, together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, printed as they are to be sung or said in churches, and the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons.'" All who refused to make this solemn declaration were *ipso facto* deprived of their livings. Further, every clergy-

man was to take the same oath of passive obedience which was included in the *Corporations Act*, together with an oath of conformity to the liturgy and an oath renouncing the Covenant. Even this was not all. It was enacted that if any minister who would not conform to these requirements persisted in public preaching, he should be liable to three months' imprisonment for each offence. Moreover, he must not become a schoolmaster or private tutor in a family, unless he obtained a licence from an Archbishop, Bishop, or Ordinary of the diocese, on the penalty of three months' imprisonment for the first offence, and a £5 fine as well as the imprisonment for subsequent offences. Finally, none should be a minister in the Church of England who had not received episcopal ordination. The penalty for this offence was £100.

And now upon those hapless Presbyterian ministers who had co-operated so heartily to bring in the new régime, and seat Charles upon his throne, the fury of the storm broke; and right nobly did they acquit themselves. There was no talk among them of submission to these insolent and intolerable terms. All the land over they prepared to lay down their livings, and go out into poverty and persecution. The men whom George Fox had so unjustly accused as hireling priests, proved themselves capable of one of the sublimest illustrations of the authority of conscience which the Christian Church can produce. Saint Bartholomew's Feast was the ominous day fixed for this new outrage on those who claimed liberty to worship God according to the dictates of reason and conscience. Of one thing we may be certain. The men who had courage and character enough to refuse to sell their consciences for office and emolument were the very men it most concerned those who loved the Church of England to retain in her allegiance. The men who swore to what they did not

believe, in order to retain their livings, were only a source of weakness and scandal to the Establishment. The result of the Act of Uniformity would have caused apprehension and dismay to any sober and reflective person. But to a Parliament still intoxicated with arrogance and unreason, the secession of the Nonconformists was mere cause for jubilation and savage triumph. According to the most careful computations about 2,000 ministers of the Church of England were driven out of their benefices, and to this number has to be added some 500 who had previously been ejected and silenced. These figures speak for themselves, but they say nothing as to the character of the men who were the victims of the Act. Two of them, Richard Baxter and Edmund Calamy, had actually been offered bishoprics, doubtless with the intention of keeping them quiet. When we recall, in addition, the names of Joseph Alleine, Simeon Ashe, William Bates, Edward Bowles, Joseph Caryl, Stephen Charnock, Samuel Clarke, Samuel Craddock, Thomas Goodwin, John Goodwin, Philip Henry, Oliver Heywood, John Howe, Henry Jessey, Nicholas Lockyer, Thomas Manton, Increase Mather, Matthew Newcomen, Philip Nye, John Owen, Matthew Poole, John Ray, William Spurstow, Bartholomew and John Wesley (great-grandfather and grandfather of John Wesley) Henry Wilkinson, Daniel Williams, and many others, he knows nothing of the standing and worth of these men who does not perceive what an irreparable loss to the Church of England their ejection was. The folly of the deed was only exceeded by its cruelty. These two thousand five hundred ministers with their wives and children were left with no means of livelihood. They were forbidden to preach, they were forbidden to teach. It was a crime to organise contributions for their support. Baxter's account of their sufferings is simple but most moving.

He tells how they had neither house nor bread; how those who loved and pitied them durst not be known to help them; how some preached in the fields "till they lay in jail or were banished." Another testimony quoted by Professor Masson is as follows: "Some lived on little more than brown bread and water; many had but eight or ten pounds a year to maintain a family, so that a piece of flesh has not come to their tables in six weeks' time, their allowance could scarce afford them bread and cheese. One went to plough six days, and preached on the Lord's Day. Another was forced to cut tobacco for a livelihood." When the broad-minded and large-hearted John Howe preached to his Torrington congregation for the last time in the parish church there was an extraordinary outburst of sorrow and devotion on the part of the people. It was characteristic of Howe that when one of the Conformists reproached him, saying he thought Howe would have *latitude* enough to remain in the Church, Howe replied that it was his latitude and catholicity that made and kept him a Nonconformist. And when the Bishop of Exeter, in answer to Howe's objection to re-ordination, inquired how that could hurt him, Howe replied indignantly, "It hurts my *understanding* . . . nothing can have two beginnings . . . I am sure I am a minister of Christ. I cannot begin again to be a minister."

It is worthy of remark that so typical a Nonconformist as John Howe put in the forefront of his objections to the Act of Uniformity the objection to re-ordination. He saw quite plainly that the whole impossible sacerdotal claim stood expressed in this demand. No man who had ever been conscious of the direct call of Christ, and the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit in His work, could ever consent to a demand which must call in question the authenticity

of these manifestations of Divine grace. John Howe was, as his whole life demonstrated, the last man in the kingdom to exaggerate trifles. But to consent to the theory implicit in the demand for re-ordination was to surrender a vital principle. It was to dishonour the ministry of hundreds of godly men who were in their graves; and it was to question his own sacredest experience. It was, moreover, to limit the activity of the grace of God to one narrow channel or mode of operation, and so to surrender his faith in the freedom of that grace. It is safe to say that the unconquerable aversion of John Howe to such a proposal remains, and will always remain, in equal force among Nonconformists of all sorts. They will never dishonour their dead; and they will continue to regard as an intolerable insult every suggestion that they should cast doubt upon the grace of God in owning and blessing their ministry by consenting to be episcopally re-ordained.

Richard Baxter has recorded for us some few instances out of the large number in which Nonconformist ministers were now sent to gaol for daring to preach and pray after their own fashion. In some places, as at Dorchester, the people flocked to the prison to hear the imprisoned Nonconformists preach, and in such numbers that the authorities put a stop to the proceedings. Petitions were made to Charles that he should redeem his promises, and prevent the persecutions, but to no avail. If he could have secured full liberty for the Roman Catholics he would have granted a moderate liberty to the Puritans. The Cavaliers about his person were in no mind to obey the teaching of the Church on any question of morals, but as Lord Macaulay says, they would have fought knee-deep in blood for "every line of her rubric and every thread of her vestments." "If the debauched Cavalier

frequented brothels and gambling houses, he at least avoided conventicles. If he never spoke without uttering ribaldry and blasphemy he made some amends by his eagerness to send Baxter and Howe to gaol for preaching and praying. Thus the clergy for a while made war on schism with so much vigour that they had little leisure to make war on vice." Finally Macaulay calls attention to what he calls the "unquestionable and instructive fact" that during the years when the political power of the Anglican hierarchy was in the zenith national virtue was at the lowest point.

There was one prisoner who had been in gaol two years already, and was to continue there with a short break for ten years to come, whose offence was declared to be that of "devilishly and perniciously abstaining from coming to church to hear divine service, and being a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles." In the eye of the magistrates he was a common tinker fellow who insolently set himself up to preach instead of mending pots and pans. They would have had him mind his own business; and if they had had their way the world would never have had for a deathless possession the "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Holy War" and "Grace Abounding." For this prisoner was John Bunyan, who was arrested when conducting a simple religious service on the 12th November, 1660. Born in 1628 in the village of Elstow in Bedfordshire, sprung, as he himself says, from "that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families of the land," his father a "brasier," or tinker, and he himself a follower of the same humble trade, John Bunyan nevertheless was to win for himself a crown of fame not only in the world of literature, but in the history of the Church of Christ. He fought as a Commonwealth soldier in the Civil Wars, after which he

JOHN BUNYAN'S STATUE AT BEDFORD.

married a simple peasant woman whose courage and fidelity through all his after sufferings and persecutions form a very noble chapter in Bunyan's story. Like so many others who became great spiritual teachers, he passed through agonies of mental conflict. But "power was with him in the night"; the inward struggle ended in the victory of faith; and the experience thus hardly won of peace with God became the sovereign qualification of the preacher. He knew Whom he had believed, and could make Him known to others. In that truly catholic and apostolic Church which existed in England under the shelter of the Protectorate, Bunyan was a welcome preacher in more than one parish church. A Free Church had been in existence in Bedford since the year 1650. It is in existence to-day, and its pastor, the Rev. John Brown, has written the classic biography of John Bunyan. The minister during whose pastorate Bunyan joined this free Christian community was one of the most interesting and remarkable persons of the day—John Gifford. He had been a Royalist soldier, with all the vices of his order. Captured by Fairfax, he was condemned to death as a ringleader in the Kentish uprising; but he escaped from prison, and after singular wanderings reached Bedford, where the change in his life began. He, too, began to preach, and received "some light in the Congregationall way," in consequence of which a church was gathered, and John Gifford became the minister. When Cromwell's reorganisation of the Church took place, Gifford's congregation took possession of the Church of St. John the Baptist, and he became the rector, and that year, 1653, John Bunyan formally joined the church under Gifford's pastoral care. John Gifford died two years later, but the church went on its way "walking forth in faith and obedience" until in

1660 it lost its place of meeting, owing to the Restoration and in the same year lost its pastor, John Gifford's successor. The next outstanding event in its history is the arrest of Bunyan. Bunyan had not been chosen pastor of the church at the time of his arrest, though he did become so twelve years later when he was released from his first imprisonment. Often during those twelve years the gaol at Bedford was overcrowded with Nonconformists who had been seized while at worship and marched off by the constables to prison to expiate the intolerable offence. But we must now set on record certain further statutes in which the spirit of bigotry incarnated itself at this time.

There had been just a bare chance that the penal clauses of the Act of Uniformity would be suspended after all, not because Charles loved the Protestant Nonconformists, but because he desired to protect the Papists. In pursuance of this policy Charles tried a fall with his arrogant and strong-willed Chancellor, Edward Hyde, now Earl of Clarendon. The Lords, however, stood by Clarendon, and Charles, who was constitutionally indolent, gave up the attempt. As for Parliament, its zeal against the evicted Nonconformists had not abated one jot, and it was prepared to proceed to severer measures still for the enforcement of uniformity and the extirpation of dissent. On May 17, 1664, the Conventicles Act was passed. By this Act it was decreed that any Nonconformists attending a conventicle, or assembling together to the number of more than five persons in addition to members of a family, for any religious purpose not in conformity with the Church of England, should be punishable with a fine of £5 or three months' imprisonment for a first offence. For the second offence the punishment was doubled. For the third offence it was to be transportation to some "foreign plantation"—

not New England, where the offender would find sympathisers and friends. "And now," as Baxter says, "came in the people's trial, as well as the ministers'." Some of the people had thought the ministers not bold enough in defying the law; now their own turn had come, and they began to think that "secrecy was no sin." "Especially the rich were as cautelous as the ministers," Baxter remarks drily. He was himself, however, of a compromising disposition, and never too friendly to those who were pronounced in their resistance to "the throned iniquity that frameth mischief by a law." Possibly neither Baxter nor the most forward of the Dissenters realised at the time that what were to be among the dearest rights of Englishmen rested for their vindication upon them. The right of combination and association, the right of public meeting, as well as the right to work and worship according to the dictates of conscience and reason—these rights were all at stake in the struggle between the persecuting Parliament and the unconquerable men and women who were the victims of their tyranny. Among all the Nonconformists none were bearing a more heroic and consistent testimony than those whom Baxter, who never liked them, designates "the Fanaticks called Quakers." These men and women scorned to meet in secret. The doors of their meeting-houses were open for any to come in who wished. The constable or the soldier found no barrier to admittance; it was as easy for him to enter as for any member of the society. When they drove the worshippers out into the street, no resistance was made, but as soon as the soldier's hand was withdrawn the worshipper returned to his place. It was a singular struggle. Never before had soldiers had to fight with those who refused to fight with them or even to resist them. Up and down the country, every gaol was filled with "the fanaticks called Quakers."

Newgate was crowded with them, and as Baxter admits, "abundance of them died in prison, yet they continued their Assemblies still." George Fox was flung into Lancaster gaol and afterwards removed to Scarborough. He was in prison almost three years at this time; and there is no doubt that the inhuman treatment he received severely affected his health. No statistics as to the number of Nonconformists who died in these horrible prisons can ever be compiled. It is certain that if they could be we should stand aghast at the appalling total. Their sufferings were a species of tribute paid to the Church by the profligate Cavaliers to salve their consciences for neglect of the fundamental moralities of the Christian religion.

Yet there were calamities enough befalling the State to rebuke even the levity and unreality of the Court. The war with the Dutch had been begun that was to develop so disastrously to British honour and credit. Then, in 1665, there fell on London the scourge of pestilence. The terror of that time has been described by many pens. Scarcely a house was to be found in which there was not one dead. Out of the comparatively small population of the London of that day, Baxter says a hundred thousand perished. The silence of death fell on the doomed city. All who were not detained by necessity fled before the plague-fiend; and the grass grew in White Hall Court. The time had come when many of the despised Nonconformist ministers were to prove the reality of their religion. "Most of the conformable ministers fled and left their flocks in the time of their extremity." There was no one to occupy the "forsaken pulpit," to pity "the dying and distressed people," to "call the impenitent to repentance and help men to prepare for another world." So certain Nonconformist ministers, in defiance of the law, came up to

London on this errand of mercy, to preach, "to visit the sick and get what relief they could for the poor." Among these heroes Baxter mentions Thomas Vincent, Mr. Chester, Mr. Janeway, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Franklin. "The face of death did so awaken both the preachers and the hearers that preachers exceeded themselves in lively fervent preaching and the people crowded constantly to hear them." Little wonder that "religion took that hold on the people's hearts as could never afterwards be loosed."

Parliament cannot be supposed to have known much of this, for it had removed to Oxford to avoid the plague, and was exercising itself with the problem how to make the lot of the Nonconformist more intolerable still. The next evidence of its spirit was the abominable Five Mile Act, in the autumn of 1665. The provisions of this Act were that no Nonconformist ex-minister or teacher of what denomination soever should "unless only in passing upon the road" come within five miles of any city, or town-corporate, or borough sending member to Parliament, or within the same distance of any parish or place where he had formerly preached or taught, under a penalty of £40 for every offence. Another requirement was that no person, male or female, that did not take the oath of passive obedience to the King, and frequent Divine service as by law established, should be allowed to teach or have pupils. The penalty for such an offence would be £40.

No more disgraceful Act has ever stained the pages of the statute-book of England. Nonconformist ministers and their families already reduced to destitution were driven out of the considerable towns where they were earning a precarious livelihood, and compelled to seek what refuge they could in poor and obscure villages where they were not known. Baxter says

many were "necessitated to break" the law lest "they should murder themselves and their families." Yet those who were reduced to conformity even by this cruel instrument would seem to have been very few. "Cargoes of Quakers and others," says Masson, "had already been exported to the black ends of the earth." The misery and cruelty of the time were indescribable; there were defections here and there, but the great mass of the Nonconformists never quailed.

Where the material is so abundant of fortitude and endurance, it seems invidious to select certain examples; yet one or two instances must be quoted illustrative of a multitude. Joseph Alleine was the young minister of Taunton. He had won reputation by his book, "A Call to the Unconverted," which had been widely circulated. In Taunton he was "universally beloved for his great piety and devotion." These qualities, however, could not save him. He was ejected under the Act of Uniformity, and such preaching as he was able to do afterwards was done in secrecy. However, in 1663, he was committed to Ilchester Gaol for preaching in his own house. For a year he languished in prison; then he was set at liberty until a repetition of the offence of preaching caused him to be sent to gaol a second time, "with several other ministers and forty private persons." He did not survive the second confinement, but succumbed to weakness and distemper "contracted in prison." He was under thirty-six years of age when he died. The story of Vavasour Powell, the intrepid Baptist evangelist of Wales, is a splendid illustration of the Nonconformist spirit. He had been a commissioner appointed by Parliament in 1649 "for the better propagating and preaching of the Gospel in Wales," a cause which he helped more by his example even than by methods of organisation. He

penetrated to the most "obscure and unfrequented parts of the principality," preaching everywhere with extraordinary fervour and success. At the Restoration, the day of his enemies came, and they took full advantage of it. Powell was seized and imprisoned at Shrewsbury for nine weeks. On his release he resumed his evangelistic labours, and at the end of twenty-four days he was again apprehended, taken to London, and lodged in the Fleet. In that noisome dungeon he lingered for two years, and when he was removed it was only to occupy a cell in Southsea Castle, a close prisoner, for five years longer. On the fall of Clarendon he obtained his liberty, but before a year was over he was lodged in Cardiff Gaol for preaching at Merthyr. Eventually he was taken to London again and deposited once more in the Fleet, where he died in 1670. He was then fifty-three, and he had spent eleven of his years in various prisons. We are told that when his body was interred at Bunhill Fields an "innumerable crowd" attended him to his grave. On his tombstone the significant words are to be found that "in the defection of many he found grace to be faithful." Lest the unfounded idea should be entertained that the ministers of religion were the only sufferers under the Restoration tyranny we may add a brief account of Colonel Hutchinson. The indignities to which he was subjected seem all the grosser by reason of the singular charm of his personality. He has often been held up as an example of Puritanism at its best. He was a practised musician and an ardent sportsman, fond of books and the arts. Withal the temper of his mind was predominantly serious, and he had no doubt where the right lay in the controversy between the Parliament and the King. He had been one of Charles's judges, in consequence of which, at the Restoration, he was dis-

missed from Parliament and declared incapable of any public office. Later, his house was pillaged, and he himself arrested as he was expounding the Scriptures to his family. He was "thrust into a filthy prison where he fell sick," but recovered sufficiently to be removed to London and lodged in the Tower. Here his suffering was greatly aggravated by the callousness and deliberate cruelty of the keeper. From the Tower he was sent to Sandown Castle in Kent, where he was "confined to a dreary damp room that was exposed to the piercing air of the sea." The gloom of the picture is only relieved by his wife's noble fidelity and the prisoner's own unconquerable faith and fortitude. At Sandown he rapidly sank, and passed away on September 11, 1664, saying among his latest words, "There's none but Christ, none but Christ, in whom I have unspeakable joy more than I can express." It should be added that Colonel Hutchinson and his wife had both embraced Baptist convictions, on account of which they had to endure much obloquy.

More than one attempt was made at the time to estimate the number of these sufferers for conscience' sake, but all such estimates must be accepted with caution. In a preface to Delaune's "Plea for the Nonconformists" the writer alleges that *eight thousand* Protestant Dissenters perished in prison in the reign of Charles II. Mr. Jeremy Wright, a Churchman, gives the number at *five thousand*, and adds that he collected a list of *sixty-eight thousand* who suffered in person or property for their fidelity to their principles. We know that at one time five thousand Quakers were confined in the various prisons. Neither was there any limit to the period of confinement. A Baptist preacher, the Rev. Joseph Wright, lay in Maidstone Gaol for twenty years. The sufferings of women and children, the

losses in trade and estate are beyond all conception. Thousands fled beyond the seas, to the Low Countries, and to America. Hundreds were transported as convicts to the plantations. In prisons at home honourable and upright men and women were compelled to herd with felons and breathe an air that was thick with blasphemy and profanity. And all the while the Archbishops and Bishops who were guilty of these brutalities towards the more earnest part of England talked obsequious nothings to the voluptuaries of the Court, and connived at the obscenities and immoralities they dare not admonish.

The plague had run its awful course, and fashionable London had begun again to frequent the city, when another event occurred in which the awakening conscience of the people discerned a manifest judgment of Heaven. In the early morning of Sunday, September 2, 1666, the house of a baker in Pudding Lane caught fire. A high wind fanned the flames, and the conflagration spread until "two-thirds of the entire city, extending from the Tower to the Temple, and from the river nearly to Smithfield and London Wall, were left in ruins." St. Paul's Cathedral, the Exchange, the Guildhall, the Custom House, Sion College, and other famous public buildings were reduced to heaps of blackened ashes. The wretched inhabitants were left homeless and destitute, all their property destroyed. Even the diarist Evelyn begins to speak about "our prodigious ingratitude, burning lusts, dissolute Court, profane and abominable lives." The Court and the King, however, do not appear to have been much affected, which was an aggravation of the scandal to serious-minded people. "Profaneness and atheism" surrounded Charles. The public money was poured out like water on his mistresses and dissolute favourites. The "Presbyterian" Non-

conformists had now much cause to reflect what sort of a monarch they had sacrificed everything to seat upon the throne. But the end of England's shame and dishonour was not yet. The war with Holland was still going on, and in May, 1667, the Dutch Admirals Ruyter and De Witt sailed their fleet up the Medway and the Thames. The English sailors were mutinous because their pay was withheld; the money that should have come to them being expended in the follies and wickednesses of the Court. The Dutch had an easy task. English shipping was burnt, many of the ships of the navy going up in smoke and flame almost within sight of London. To such depths of humiliation had the England of Elizabeth and Cromwell fallen. "It is strange," says Mr. Pepys, "how everybody do now-adays reflect upon Oliver and commend him, what brave things he did and made all the neighbour princes fear him." It began to occur to the nation that it had been a great thing to have a man at its head who lived in the fear of God. But Oliver's body was lying under the gallows at Tyburn, and his empty and desecrated grave at Westminster Abbey seemed almost like the parable of a nation void of his spirit.

Yet, if England's greatness had disappeared, there were still great Englishmen alive and at work, adding to the splendour of her fame. The greatest of them all was to be found not among the butterfly courtiers of Whitehall, but, during the year of the plague, in a cottage still standing at Chalfont St. Giles, in Buckinghamshire. He was almost or quite the last of the great Cromwellian Independents, and he was now blind, and broken in health, but occupied less with ephemeral politics than with themes of enduring interest and value. It was after the fire of London, and while the Dutch were contemptuously burning British ships off Chatham, that

the proof sheets of John Milton's "Paradise Lost" were being printed by Samuel Simmons, to whom the poem had been sold outright for £5 (£17 10s. of our money) down, and the chance of three further similar payments if three editions should be called for. He had begun the poem before the Restoration, but when the Commonwealth was overthrown and Puritanism was temporarily overwhelmed beneath the flood of licentiousness, it was inevitable that the epic should express the noble grief of its author. His Paradise *was* lost. The reign of freedom and purity was at an end. England had lost her Eden. So Milton found relief for his own sorrow in the poem which was the noblest appeal of Puritanism to the soul of England. "Paradise Lost" is Milton's "Faust." Its theme is that by which the greatest souls have ever been exercised—the battle of heaven and hell for the soul of man. To Milton such a war had verily been waged for the soul of a kingdom. And now heaven's victory was forfeit by man's weak consent to the temptation which would turn his garden into a wilderness. The fall of England was the fall of man, and her downfall in the world his consequent misery and loss. All the soul of Milton was poured into this splendid verse. The sins that sate leagued and throned in hell were such as were arrayed against the life of England—Mammon and Belial and Moloch. Belial, indeed, may have stood for Charles himself.

> Belial in act more graceful and humane;
> A fairer person lost not heaven; he seemed
> For dignity composed and high exploits;
> But all was false and hollow . . .
> . . . for his thoughts were low
> To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
> Timorous and slothful.

And Belial is a ruler of the powers of hell, and an

enemy of the soul of man. The great epic rolls on past the tragedy of the fall and the expulsion to a conclusion of sober hope and sublime piety. Perhaps he now sees that the Puritanism that tried to establish itself by force of arms, thinking to take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, had missed the way and failed. Adam's last lesson was learned when he perceived this as the Divine Wisdom—

> With good
> Still overcoming evil; and by small
> Accomplishing great things; by things deemed weak
> Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
> By simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake
> Is fortitude to highest victory,
> And to the faithful death the gate of life.

Here was hope and cheer for his persecuted and distressed Nonconformist comrades dying in the prisons of Charles. The weapons of their warfare would be not carnal but spiritual, even fortitude and meekness; and their Naseby would not be the triumph of pike and sword, but a nobler victory won by "suffering for truth's sake."

If Puritanism was forbidden by law to make its voice heard in public places, or even in private conventicles, it could still liberate its soul in literature. If it might not preach the Gospel to England, it was still able within limits to address itself to the conscience of the country through the Press. It was during the Commonwealth that Richard Baxter had written and published his "Call to the Unconverted," and now he wrote in the same strain his "Now or Never." The very solemnity and misery of the times doubtless gave urgency and impressiveness to the plea. Certainly its opportuneness and directness won for it an instantaneous welcome. Baxter's writings were already well known. John

RICHARD BAXTER.

Eliot had translated the "Call to the Unconverted" into the Indian dialect. "The Saints' Everlasting Rest" had found an assured and permanent place in the world's library of devotional literature. In that truly great book, disfigured though it is by certain lurid portions of the latter half, Baxter reveals a spirit of catholicity and noble sympathy far in advance of the average spirit of either Anglican or Separatist. In his description of the beatitude of heaven he dwells with special satisfaction on the fact that we shall "rest from all our sad divisions and un-Christianlike quarrels with one another." What could be more admirable than such reflections as these? "Paul and Barnabas are there fully reconciled. There they are not every man conceited of his own understanding and in love with the issue of his own brain, but all admiring the Divine perfection and in love with God and one another." "Those whom one house could not hold, nor one Church hold them, no, nor one kingdom neither; yet one heaven and one God may hold. . . . Oh, how canst thou find it in thy heart, if thou bear the heart and face of a Christian, to be bitter or injurious against thy brethren, when thou dost but once think of that time and place where thou hopest in the nearest and sweetest familiarity to live and rejoice with them for ever! I confess their infirmities are not to be loved, nor sin to be tolerated because it is theirs. But be sure it is sin which thou opposest in them; and do it with a spirit of meekness and compassion, that the world may see thy love to the person, while thou opposest the offence. Alas! that Turk and Pagan can agree in wickedness better than Christians in the truth! That bears and lions, wolves and tigers can agree together, but Christians cannot! That a legion of devils can accord in one body, and not the tenth part of so many Christians

in one Church ! " Certainly the author of " The Saints' Everlasting Rest " had now more need for such thoughts and imaginations disposing to charity than in the days when the book was written. The whole land was full of bitterness, and cruelty of Christian to Christian. It was an infallible instinct that led the greatest of the Puritan theologians to address themselves at such a time to the roots of the bitterness in the unregenerate spirit. Baxter's " Call to the Unconverted," published on the eve of the Restoration, had an enormous circulation through these troublous times, and his " Now or Never " was only less sought after. The significance of this lies in the fact that Baxter's theology marked a great advance on the older Calvinism. " We are commanded to offer life to you all, and to tell you from God that if you will turn you may live "—this kind of universal appeal was new. In the light of it, the doctrine of reprobation appeared doubly and trebly dark and incredible.

Another standard work of devotional literature was the product of these days of persecution. John Howe had taken refuge in Ireland under the kindly protection of Lord Masserene of Antrim Castle. There, in his seclusion, he wrote the greater part of his famous book, " The Living Temple." It seems probable that the destruction of St. Paul's Cathedral in the great fire of 1666, and its reconstruction under the master-hand of Sir Christopher Wren, suggested to John Howe the more sublime theme of the destruction of the soul by the fires of lust and pride and sin, and its reconstruction by the Divine Architect and Redeemer. We may be sure, too, that the fate of old St. Paul's was a parable of the demoralisation of the nation, its glory departed, its soul in ruins. Across the charred and blackened remains ran the tragic legend, " Here God once dwelt." For God had once

dwelt very manifestly in the soul of England, and she had made herself a living temple which the glory of the Lord had filled. Even now, in her shame and ruin she was not hopeless. It was the day of her "destitution"; but the day of her "restitution" would come, and a nobler Christian England would rise out of the ashes, and become once again the habitation of the Most High. The great Nonconformist writers of this period had a vision akin to that of the Prophet of the Exile. They were persecuted, despised and afflicted, but they cherished unconquerable hopes that a day would arrive when the Lord would suddenly come to His temple. Between the years 1660–1666 a notable series of treatises had issued from Bedford Gaol, the work of John Bunyan, "a prisoner of hope." The titles of many of them are barely remembered now—"Praying in the Spirit," "Christian Behaviour," "The Holy City," "The Resurrection of the Dead," "Prison Meditations." When John Milton was seeking a publisher for "Paradise Lost," John Bunyan, released for a few weeks from prison, was arranging for the publication of "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," one of the most searching and thrilling pieces of autobiography in any language. It contains the narrative of Bunyan's many conflicts with principalities and powers, seen and unseen, and it is full of those touches of nature, and of something that is more than nature, which make him so great a master in the literature of the heart. He was back in prison again after this until the notorious Declaration of Indulgence of 1672, when he was released in common with thousands of his fellow Nonconformists in order that the King might have reasonable ground for showing favour to his Roman Catholic subjects. This grace was appreciated while it lasted, but there was not much of it. It enabled, however, the Congregational

Church at Bedford "with joynt consent, signified by solemn lifting up of their hands, to call forth and appoint our brother John Bunyan to the pastorall office or eldership"; and it gave Bunyan some three years of liberty to devote to this solemn vocation, during which time he was instrumental by devoted evangelistic labours in calling several Congregational causes into existence. Prolific as had been his literary labours hitherto, it was in the decade between 1675–1685 that he achieved his imperishable fame. To that period belong the "Pilgrim's Progress," first and second parts, and "The Holy War." The first part of the "Pilgrim's Progress" was written in prison, it is believed in 1675–1676. Early in the year 1678 it was licensed, and sent forth on its memorable journey "price bound 1s. 6d." Its success was instantaneous. Three editions were called for in the first year, and it has been computed that a hundred thousand copies had been circulated before the Revolution. Since that time it has been translated into almost every considerable language. East and west, north and south have been captive under its spell. It is safe to say that no other book in any language, save the Bible only, has had such a multitude of readers. In childhood, in youth, in middle-age, in old age, its charm is equally powerful. The language of the "Pilgrim's Progress" is simple, homely, terse, and clean. The theme is most arresting. No romance of the days of chivalry, recording the adventures of some knight-errant, is so intense and thrilling as this allegory of the pilgrimage of a Christian. Bunyan crowds his canvas with figures, and they all live before us. We have met them in our own lives, and men and women will continue to meet them till time shall be no more. This is the secret of the imperishable interest of the "Pilgrim's Progress." It is the most human of books, and the author excels all others in his

knowledge of the human heart. But to praise Bunyan's masterpiece is superfluous and impertinent. To his skill to interpret our own subtlest thoughts and feelings we all do homage, but it is not always recognised how brave a book he had written, and how certain passages in it must have probed to the quick the ulcerous evils of the time. Bunyan may have known nothing personally of the Court of Charles, but "Vanity Fair" could not have been better drawn if he had known everything. There could be no mistaking the saying that "the ware of Rome and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this fair"; nor the fact that one of the chief witnesses against Faithful was Superstition, who pronounced him "a very pestilent fellow," and to whose theories Faithful made reply that "whatever is thrust into the worship of God that is not according to Divine revelation cannot be done but by a human faith, which faith will not be profitable to eternal life." The jury that condemned Faithful, whose portrait, as Bunyan drew it, was that of a plain, earnest, loyal Puritan of the time, contained such men as Mr. Love-Lust and Mr. Live-Loose, whose reason for their cruelty was expressed in the words of the latter, "he would always be condemning my way." Again, with Romanism in favour at the Court, the courage of Bunyan's description of Giant Pope will not be denied. Christian found him sitting among "blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men," the evidence of his former power; but "though he be yet alive he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them."

Or again, what can exceed the pungency of the satire

of such a conversation as that chronicled between Mr. Money-love and Mr. By-ends? Mr. By-ends is the plausible champion of compromise. He has no patience with Christian and Hopeful. "They are for hazarding all for God at a clap, and I am for taking all advantages *to secure my life and estate*. . . . I am for Religion, in what, and so far as, the times and my safety will bear it. They are for Religion when in rags and contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his golden slippers in the sunshine and with applause." The question arises whether a *minister* may change his principles to win promotion. Mr. Money-love is admirable on the question. "Suppose a minister, a worthy man, possessed but of a very small benefice, and has in his eye a greater, more fat and plump by far; he has also now an opportunity of getting it; yet so as by being more studious, by preaching more frequently and zealously, *and because the temper of the people requires it by altering some of his principles*, for my part I see no reason but a man may do this, ay, and more a great deal besides, and yet be an honest man." Among the reasons given for this conclusion is the following excellent illustration of Bunyan's irony: "Now as for his complying with the temper of his people by deserting, to serve them, some of his principles, this argueth that he is of a self-denying temper, of a sweet and winning deportment, and so more fit for the ministerial function." When the problem was put to Christian he soon disposed of it. "Judas the devil was of this religion; he was religious for the bag." All the world was to know Bunyan's hearty contempt for the pliable priests who would dance to any tune the State might pipe.

The "Holy War" would have won for Bunyan a place among the immortals if he had never written the "Pilgrim's Progress." Throughout it we find the same intimate knowledge of life, the same wealth of

observation and imagination, the same fertility of invention, the same rare spiritual insight. Moreover, we see how fearlessly and faithfully the life of the age is mirrored in its pages. The capture of Mansoul by the forces of evil, and the installation among its governors of the lord Lustings, and Mr. Swearing, Mr. Whoring, Mr. Drunkenness, Mr. Incredulity, and others, is a grim picture of the situation in England; but nobody at the time could mistake the significance of the passage in which Diabolus imposes "a new oath and horrible covenant" upon the captured state, "To wit, that they should never desert him, nor his government, nor yet betray him, *nor seek to alter his laws*." Against this evil and corrupt tyranny comes up the army of Shaddai, with such strength of purpose and earnestness of preparation that Mansoul "could not sleep securely as before, nor could they go to their debaucheries with that quietness as in times past."

The "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Holy War" belong to every age because they belong to no age; yet they were searching tracts for the times. They were read and re-read by all classes. Scholars enjoyed them as well as peasants, adults as well as children. Men forgot that they were being taught by a "common tinker fellow"; they felt rather that they were at the feet of a teacher sent from God. Gradually the fact came home to them that this was one whom the authorities had forbidden to preach and teach, as not being episcopally ordained. This man with the open vision, who was moving the land to love righteousness more than all the bishops had done in half a century, had suffered twelve years of prison confinement because he claimed that he was ordained of God to preach and teach, a claim that he had now established before the world. What was to be thought of a Church that

could license any profligate vicar or weak-minded curate, and commit this inspired seer to the county gaol? Bunyan not only exposed the wickedness of the system under which he suffered, but he made the dominant ecclesiastical and sacerdotal theory ridiculous. He had been excluded from every pulpit in the land, and locked up from all intercourse with his fellows for his insolence in daring to assert his right to preach; and lo, scarce a family in the nation but was drinking in his teaching and following breathlessly while he described to them the pilgrimage of the soul.

This age of disability and oppression was nevertheless the golden age of Puritan and Free Church literature. John Milton did not live to read the "Pilgrim's Progress," but in 1671 he gave to the world two stupendous efforts of his genius, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes." Milton had chosen for the theme of his last great poem the triumph of the blind Samson over the Philistines who had degraded his country and disgraced himself. He himself was old and blind and in disgrace; but he had all his powers unimpaired and his sympathies wholly unchanged. What he had writ he had writ. No word of weak regret had ever crossed his lips. Nor had he ever lost his ideals, or his faith that the age of freedom would return. In "Samson Agonistes" he takes farewell of the stage on which he has played so majestic a part. For all he has suffered in the cause of freedom and purity this is his revenge. As the fallen patriot, sport of his foes, is given power from heaven to visit heroic vengeance upon their contempt, so is it to be with Milton.

> But he, though blind of sight,
> Despised and thought extinguished quite,
> With inward eyes illuminated,
> His fiery virtue roused
> From under ashes into sudden flame.

Then in Manoah's closing passage Milton writes his own epitaph :

> Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
> Nor much more cause ; Samson hath quit himself
> Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
> A life heroic. . . .
> To Israel
> Honour hath left, and freedom; let but them
> Find courage to lay hold on this occasion ;
> To himself and father's house eternal fame ;
> And which is best and happiest yet, all this
> With God not parted from him, as was feared,
> But favouring and assisting to the end.
> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble,

On Sunday, November 8th, 1674, at his house in Bunhill Fields, John Milton died. He was buried in St. Giles', Cripplegate. It may truly be said of him that no son of England ever loved her better, served her with more self-sacrifice, or counselled her more nobly. His glory stands expressed in Wordsworth's famous lines, in that while his soul " was like a star and dwelt apart," he nevertheless so gave himself to the love and service of the State that it could also be said of him—

> Thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

Reference has already been made to the Declaration of Indulgence. The effect was to liberate thousands of Nonconformists from prison and give an enormous impulse to Free Church activity in all parts of the land. Its effect, however, was of short duration. That it was intended to help the King in his intrigues to strengthen the position of the Catholics in the State was soon perceived, and as soon as the Commons had a chance to

speak their mind they did so with no uncertain sound. As for the Nonconformists, they would sooner be persecuted than take a bribe to sell England to Rome, and they said so. When Charles was next in need of a subsidy, the Commons dictated terms. First, the Declaration of Indulgence was revoked, and secondly, the Test Act was passed without a dissentient voice, imposing on everybody who held any civil or military office in the State an oath denouncing transubstantiation and the obligation to take the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. This Act, primarily aimed at the Catholics, fell with equal force upon the Protestant Dissenters. Its immediate effect was that the King's brother, the Duke of York, confessed himself a Catholic and resigned his position as Lord High Admiral. The Lord Treasurer Clifford also resigned. It speedily became evident to what extent the army and the civil service had been packed with Catholics. Henceforth the principal energies of Charles were directed, though without effect, to secure the repeal of the Test Act. The popular feeling against the Catholics was excited to the point of frenzy by the perjuries of a miscreant named Titus Oates, who professed to reveal the details of a vast Popish conspiracy "for the subversion of Protestantism and the death of the King." Oates, who had begun as a Baptist minister, continued as a curate and chaplain, and ended as a Jesuit convert, now came forward with solemn depositions as to what he had learned through intercourse with the Jesuits. He was believed; and an atrocious outbreak of persecution against the Catholics was the result. Numbers of them were barbarously executed and thousands flung into prison.

There was a plot, but Charles knew more about it than Oates. The chief conspirators were the King and

his brother, the Duke of York, the legal heir to the throne. Both were Catholics and intriguers in the Catholic interest. The one obstacle to their success was that they could not make the Parliament or the people anything else than Protestant. Parliament, indeed, could not be persuaded to exclude the Duke of York from the succession, but they were resolved to use their powers to the full for the suppression of popery. So forward and vehement were they in this policy that they overreached themselves ; and a reaction of public feeling took place which Charles was not slow to take advantage of. The plot, too, was being shown by this time to be a tissue of lies, and remorse for the cruelties inflicted on innocent Catholics mingled with the belief that the King had been hardly used.

It had been Charles's policy all through his reign to cultivate a reputation for loyalty to the Church of England by persecuting his Protestant Nonconformist subjects. This policy was his refuge now. One of the immediate consequences of it was the emigration of William Penn to America, where he founded the colony of Pennsylvania as a refuge for the distressed Quakers of England.

Even those who, following Lord Macaulay, have summed up adversely to Penn's conduct and character in the reign of James II., have to admit that up to the period we have reached the qualities he had displayed had been those of a man of honour, conscience, and enthusiasm. The son of Admiral Penn, who distinguished himself by intriguing with Charles while in the service of the Commonwealth, and who was a full-blooded Royalist after the Restoration, Penn was converted to Quakerism while at Oxford by the preaching of a certain Thomas Loe. In consequence of his adoption of Quaker practices he was expelled from the

university and incurred the anger of his father. Sent away for a Continental tour, he was seemingly cured of his "distemper," but hearing Loe again in Ireland, he received the convictions which determined his life history. His first book was entitled "The Sandy Foundation Shaken," and in consequence of it he suffered solitary confinement in the Tower for eight months, during which time, however, he wrote a second book, one of the most popular of his many writings, "No Cross, No Crown." After his release, his activities in the interests of the cause he had embraced were as bold and pertinacious as ever. His trial with Captain William Mead for worshipping in Friends' meeting was memorable for the shrewd and courageous defence of Penn, who identified his cause with that of the general privileges and liberties of English subjects to such effect that, despite the fury of his prosecutors and the gross animus of his judge, he and his comrade were acquitted by the jury, amid enthusiastic demonstrations of approval in court. The old admiral, his father, lay on his death-bed soon after, but was reconciled to his son and expressed pride in his noble fidelity to the path of duty. Penn was thus left a rich man, but his zeal for the Society of Friends was in no wise diminished, and he endured a second imprisonment of six months, which he turned to advantage by writing four new books. On his release he travelled through Germany and Holland on an evangelistic tour, a journey which he afterwards repeated in the company of George Fox and Robert Barclay. He had by this time conceived his ideal of a Free State beyond the Atlantic where spiritual freedom should be absolute; and he obtained from the Government, in discharge of a debt owed to his father, a grant of territory in America, which Charles himself happily christened Pennsylvania. With a picked company of like-

minded emigrants, Penn set sail in 1682 to found the new commonwealth. Among the articles of its constitution, the celebrated declaration appears: "That all persons living in this province, who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder and ruler of the world, and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall in no wise be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasions or practice in matters of faith and worship; nor shall they be compelled at any time to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever." It should be added that in all his dealings with the Indian tribes Penn showed an exemplary sense of justice and magnanimity. He brought, too, to the elaboration of details of government and administration a spirit of practical statesmanship which went far to secure the splendid success of the colony. The capital, named characteristically Philadelphia, was admirably located, and the scale on which it was planned revealed Penn's confidence in its future. The early years were busy and prosperous; then the illness of his wife and the renewed sufferings of his friends in England drew Penn back to the mother country. But he had laid foundations on which the future edifice of a powerful and influential state might securely repose.

The reign of Charles II., as mortifying to British honour as degrading to British morals, was drawing to a close. The Declaration of Indulgence had been revoked, and the prisons were again crowded with Free Churchmen who could neither be bullied nor bribed into a belief in prelacy and uniformity. A real addition, however, had been made to the liberties of Englishmen. The rise of two political parties, Whigs and Tories, had tended to define certain issues, and bring to light in-

tolerable abuses and grievances. Of these, perhaps, the worst had been the liability to which men and women were exposed of being shut up in prison without even the formality of a trial, and immured there year after year with no possibility of defence. That this was in contradiction to some of the most ancient and famous of our liberties was no disproof of the facts. Arbitrary rule was a law unto itself, and one of the earliest triumphs of the Whigs was to curb its power by the great Habeas Corpus Act of 1679. Every prisoner had now to be produced before the Court that it might be decided whether he was or was not rightfully detained. Judges and gaolers transgressing this law were subject to severe penalties. When to this Act was added the abolition of the old galling censorship of the Press, the Whig party in Parliament had reason to congratulate itself on some substantial progress. The sufferings of the Nonconformists from arbitrary imprisonments, and their persistence in printing and publishing their opinions in the teeth of malignant opposition, had contributed not a little to establish these new rights. Gradual as the movement towards civil and religious liberty was, and dark as the clouds were that shadowed the road immediately ahead, the spirit of tolerance was penetrating the hearts and minds of the people. Parliament had shown more than once a disposition to befriend the men who were enduring such unmerited cruelties for conscience' sake. More would have been done for their relief but that the fear of popery oppressed those who would have best liked to aid them. The fear was not unfounded. When Charles II. was taken suddenly ill in 1685 his one concern was to be formally received into the Church to which he had always belonged in heart. This was done with all possible secrecy. For twenty-five years he had been

the acknowledged head of a Church which he believed to be in deadly schism, and the confessed defender of a Protestant faith which he believed to be a malignant heresy. The Church of England had had the dubious honour of his irregular and contemptible life; the Church of Rome assumed the responsibility for his soul after death. It was perhaps little to Charles that his last hours made full confession of the hypocrisy and perjury of his life as a king. He was succeeded by one who, with a character as vicious as Charles's own, had yet the merit of making no secret of his religious opinions. For the first time since the accession of Mary Tudor in 1550 a declared Catholic ascended the throne of England.

CHAPTER X.

The Bloody Assize.

The head of the Reformed Church of England was now an avowed Roman Catholic. To such incongruities and absurdities does the system of a Church establishment lend itself. The reign of James II. was one of the shortest in our history; it was also one of the worst. It witnessed the last eruption of civil war in England; the worst degradation of English justice; the foulest inhumanities ever perpetrated on English soil; and the last agony of English Nonconformity. One characteristic James II. shared with his Romanist predecessor, Mary Tudor, and his Romanist ancestress Mary, Queen of Scots—he was deliberately cruel. When, during the reign of Charles II., he was sent north to govern Scotland, he presided while the victims of his tyranny were "put to the question"; and it was noted that he seemed to be the only person who relished the proceedings. When Judge Jeffreys declared after the Bloody Assize that all he had done had been by direct order of the King, and that James' thirst for vengeance was insatiable, nobody found it impossible to credit the story. It is significant that in this reign stake and faggots were used in England for the last time, and the victim was a woman. The three years before us now are three years of horror. But as the darkest hour of the night is just before the dawn, so the nether gloom of the reign of James preceded the dawn of the Revolution.

Like all the other Stuarts, James began with a profusion of promises, which were received with enthusiasm by his subjects. He was especially emphatic in his undertaking to support and defend the Church of England as by law established. That he was himself a Roman Catholic and bound by his Creed to regard every Protestant Church as in deadly schism, a nest of heretics, was no obstacle to his undertaking publicly the support and patronage of this schismatical and heretical institution. He was believed as his Stuart predecessors had been believed. "We have now for our Church the word of a king," exclaimed a preacher in a transport of loyalty, "and a king who was never worse than his word." To all appearances there was not a Protestant prelate left in the Church with soul enough to protest against having a Roman Catholic king at the head of it.

James did not leave anyone long in doubt as to his character and intentions. One of the earliest of his appointments was the promotion of Jeffreys to be Chief Justice. The appointment was ominous of much, for Jeffreys' reputation for cynical barbarity was firmly established. He was one of those monsters so rare in England who take a positive delight in the infliction of pain. In him James had a creature after his own heart. It was true that Jeffreys had formerly posed as a Protestant, and had disgraced the cause he professed by brutal exultation over the sufferings of Popish priests condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Now, in Macaulay's words, he had "made haste to sell his forehead of brass and his tongue of venom to the Court." That James should have singled out this coarse and heartless hypocrite to be the instrument of his policy threw a sinister light on what that policy was to be.

England might naturally have looked for help to Parliament, but the outburst of loyalty in which the

reign began had resulted in an overwhelming Tory and Loyalist majority. This was partly due to the horror which had been experienced a year or two before by the discovery of the Rye House Plot to assassinate Charles and James together—a plot which had proved the undoing of several of the Whig leaders. This plot was now used to brand the entire Whig party as disloyal, and their defeat almost amounted to annihilation. The two Universities, as representing the highest intellectual life of the nation, declared with enthusiasm and unanimity the sanctity of the hereditary succession and "that passive obedience even to the worst of rulers was a part of religion." Nothing could have been more serviceable to the designs of James than this servility on the part of the majority of his subjects. The day would soon come when the Universities would repent in sackcloth and ashes the folly of their declarations.

For the present, however, loyalism had placed the noblest institutions of England, her Parliament, and her Judicature, at the feet of James. One of his first victims was, properly enough, the perjured villain Titus Oates, whose lies had brought so many innocent Catholics to the scaffold. The same day on which Oates was scourged and put in the pillory, Richard Baxter was haled before Jeffreys for protesting against the persecution of the Nonconformists. Baxter was now in his seventieth year, one of the greatest living Englishmen, and, it should be added, one of the most tolerant. He had been offered a bishopric as a tribute to the eminence of his ability and piety, and also to his loyalty to the House of Stuart. Most people will feel that if he had offended, it had been in too rash a zeal for the Restoration. He was now a great sufferer; his labours had been unceasing, while his literary work had won him durable fame. During the many years of his Kidderminster pastorate he had proved

himself a preacher of extraordinary power. It is said that five galleries were erected in his church there; and so great was his reputation that whenever he preached in London the first scholars and noblemen of the day, as well as multitudes of the poor, crowded to hear him. To have the opportunity of insulting and humiliating so noble a leader of English Puritanism exactly suited the taste of Jeffreys, who presided at what it would be ridiculous to call a trial. For a full description of that disgraceful scene the reader must be referred to the vivid pages of Macaulay. Suffice it to say that when Baxter pleaded for time to make his defence, Jeffreys burst out, "Not a minute; I can deal with saints as well as sinners. There stands Oates on one side of the pillory, and if Baxter stood on the other the two greatest rogues of the kingdom would stand together." When Baxter's counsel began to address the jury, Jeffreys became more and more outrageous. "This is an old rogue, a schismatical knave, a hypocritical villain," he shouted; "he hates the Liturgy. He would have nothing but long-winded cant without book." He swore that Baxter was a dog, and ought to be whipped through London. When Baxter edged in a remark that he had "incurred blame among dissenters by speaking respectfully of bishops," Jeffreys resorted to his wit, which was a degree worse than his abuse. "Baxter for bishops! That's a merry conceit indeed," he cried. "I know what you mean by bishops, rascals like yourself, Kidderminster bishops, factious, snivelling Presbyterians." It should be said to their honour that several clergymen of the Established Church had braved even Jeffreys' presence to bear witness to Baxter's character. They were not wanted. When Baxter protested that no jury would convict after such a trial, Jeffreys told him not to trouble himself about that. It was, indeed, all

arranged. The jury, selected for the purpose, needed only a minute's conference to declare Baxter guilty. He was fined and sent to prison. Had Jeffreys not been overruled by the other judges he would have had the venerable preacher whipped at the cart's tail.

But if in England the sky was lowering for the Nonconformists, in Scotland a veritable reign of terror was beginning. Since the Restoration the Parliament of Scotland had been effectually tuned by Charles. It was a miserable "pretence Parliament" on which only Episcopalians could sit, and for the members of which only Episcopalians could vote. It now enacted a statute that "whoever should preach in a conventicle under a roof, or should attend, either as preacher or hearer, a conventicle in the open-air, should be punished with *death* and confiscation of property." Infamous as this law was in its conception, in its execution it was more infamous still. Bands of merciless and profligate soldiers, such as the dragoons who followed Graham of Claverhouse, careered through the districts where the covenanting spirit was fiercest, butchering the inhabitants and ravaging the country. Scotland will never blot out of her memory either the brutality of the persecutors, or the heroism of their victims. It is impossible to claim the Scottish Covenanters as Free Churchmen, for they were representatives of a national Church and a polity in which the principle of toleration and freedom of worship had no place. Yet they were helping to fight the common battle for liberty of worship when they maintained their conventicles at the risk and often at the cost of their lives. Young lads were shot as well as aged men; maidens were drowned as well as aged women. James's policy of cruelty is the more amazing when we remember that it was devised and executed to strengthen the position of an Episcopal Church which he believed to

WILLIAM PENN.

(*From an old Engraving.*)

be as schismatical and heretical as the Presbytery he was endeavouring to root out by fire and sword.

In England an act of grace was performed by James early in 1685, which needs some explanation. This was the liberation from prison of, in round numbers, fifteen hundred Quakers. That this mercy to them enabled James to show a similar mercy to more than that number of Roman Catholics partially explains the step. But why the Quakers were selected out of all English Nonconformists for this tolerant treatment remains to be noted. In the first place undoubtedly their doctrine of non-resistance and aversion to war was calculated to win the favour of James, the one obstacle to whose designs lay in a possible armed revolt such as had brought his father to the block. It might be no bad thing, he thought, that this doctrine of non-resistance should be preached up and down the country even by these Quaker Nonconformists. Moreover, he had no cause of hatred against them for the wrong done to his family in the person of Charles. They were guiltless of all complicity in the business of establishing the Commonwealth; and so were all the fitter objects of his own royal condescension. Finally, William Penn was home from America. He had been a warm friend of James in earlier days, and was at once received more than graciously. He became a powerful man at Court; was admitted to a special intimacy with the King, and appointed his agent in a number of transactions which it cannot have been quite easy to reconcile with his undoubted rectitude of aim. That Penn valued his position and influence at Court for the sake of the services he was enabled to render to his persecuted brethren may freely be admitted; at the same time it was impossible for him to act as the representative of a despot like James, and not suffer somewhat in character if not in conviction in consequence.

How glad every biographer of Penn would be if certain passages relating to this period of his life could be blotted out from what is in its sum-total a very noble story. Let it stand to his credit here that his first use of Court influence was to secure the release of these fifteen hundred fellow-members of the Society of Friends.

If James and Jeffreys wanted a pretext for giving the rein to their hatred against the Protestants, and especially the Puritans, they had not long to wait. The abortive rebellion of Monmouth covered Nonconformity with odium and worked up the royalist sentiment into a frenzy of fanaticism. Monmouth, the handsome, worthless, licentious offspring of Charles's *amour* with Lucy Walters, had long posed as the champion of Protestantism. He now appeared in the West of England, rallied to his standard six thousand undisciplined troops indifferently armed, proclaimed himself King, vowed his devotion to Protestantism and guaranteed freedom of worship to the Nonconformists. His army was surprised and annihilated at Sedgemoor; he himself was captured and executed, and Jeffreys was sent to the West of England to conduct the "Bloody Assize."

The chief crime of the Somersetshire and Devonshire peasants who were now locked up by hundreds awaiting the awful gaol-delivery that was to present them before the inhumanity of Jeffreys, was that they had loved the Protestant religion not wisely but too well. They believed it to be in danger, wherein they displayed a shrewder insight or a sounder instinct than the Tory Churchmen who were aiding James's designs by their servility. Of their crime, such as it was, they were about to make appalling expiation. We may spare our readers most of the harrowing details. The story is memorable for the fact that notwithstanding all his fury, his blasphemous ravings, and incredible cruelties, Jeffreys met

men and women of humble peasant rank who were not afraid of him. Browbeaten, bullied, falsely and maliciously accused of every abomination, they were not intimidated, and could not be made to confess themselves ashamed of their cause. The net result of the Bloody Assize was that at the lowest computation three hundred and twenty persons—men, women, lads, and maidens—were hanged; while no fewer than eight hundred and forty-one less fortunate victims were sold into slavery to the West Indies. In the hideous old convict ships they died like flies. Those that survived the torments of the passage were then sold away from all their loved ones into the hell of slavery.

Of such particulars of this atrocious business as concern us here, we may select one or two. One of the most innocent sufferers for whom Jeffreys had no spark of pity, but whose death stirred the compassion of the whole country, was a woman—Alice Lisle. After Sedgemoor, a Nonconformist minister named John Hickes and a lawyer named Richard Nelthorpe fled to her house. She was well-known in Hampshire, for she was the widow of one of the Commonwealth judges whom Cromwell had raised to the peerage. Though living in retirement, her character as well as her connexions had won her respect throughout the countryside. Possibly her reputation for generous sympathies attracted the fugitives. If so, they were not deceived. It is not certain that she knew the reason of their flight. Too many Nonconformists were in trouble at the time to make it singular that these should be in need of shelter. Anyhow, her womanly compassion was excited on their behalf; she fed them and allowed them to conceal themselves in her house. The troops were hot upon the scent, the house was searched, and the men discovered. With them Alice Lisle was marched away to prison charged with harbour-

ing and concealing the King's enemies. She was Jeffreys' first victim, and he was determined to strike terror at the outset. Moreover, he had the Lord Chancellorship to win, promised to him by James, provided he did his work thoroughly. In the course of the trial Jeffreys made it clear that he regarded the rebellion as a Nonconformist rising. "There is not one of those lying, snivelling, canting Presbyterians but one way or another had a hand in the rebellion. Presbytery has all manner of villainy in it. . . . Show me a Presbyterian and I'll show thee a lying knave." So he raved, and "declaimed for an hour against Whigs and Dissenters." With all his violence the jury would not convict until he had threatened them, and then they reluctantly gave way. The next morning Jeffreys sentenced her to be burned alive in the afternoon, and only the unanimous solicitation of the clergy of Winchester Cathedral prevented the barbarity. No solicitations, however, could save her life. She was beheaded in the Winchester market-place, meeting her doom "with serene courage."

There were two brothers, William and Benjamin Hewling, young lads, "handsome, accomplished, and well-connected." Their grandfather on their mother's side was a certain William Kiffin, whose interest was afterwards solicited by James to conciliate the London Nonconformists when the King found it necessary to bid for their favour. William Kiffin's relationship to these poor fellows went against them now. Jeffreys told them outright that their grandfather deserved to be hanged as much as they. William Hewling, only nineteen years of age, was hanged first, and every possible effort was made to save Benjamin's life. Appeal to the King was the last resort. It was then that Churchill, who wished well to the suit, used the famous words, "The marble of this mantelpiece is not harder

than the King's heart." Churchill knew his master only too well. Benjamin Hewling died with the same heroic courage that his brother had displayed.

A vengeance so awful as this sickened the warmest partisans of the King, but it did nothing to subdue the spirit of the stubborn Protestants of the West. When Jeffreys returned to London, his purse was lined with the money he had extorted for the purchase of pardons. He left behind him a name that through all posterity will be the synonym for cynical and murderous cruelty. But the proof that his work was wasted was to be found in the fact that when William of Orange came at last to rescue England from the tyranny of James, it was in this very district that he landed, and the undismayed farmers and peasants of the West Country were the first to flock around his standard, as if Sedgemoor had never been lost and the Bloody Assize never held.

Jeffreys, however, proceeded to London to claim his reward in the Lord Chancellorship, and to continue his butcheries in the metropolis. There was one person under arrest in London whose case was almost identical with that of Alice Lisle. Again the prisoner was a woman, who, moved by a motherly tenderness, had sheltered a fugitive. The wretch was so unworthy of her compassion that, to save his life, he betrayed her to the authorities. Elizabeth Gaunt was a Baptist, and her life had been a noble anticipation of that of Elizabeth Fry. Almost alone at the time she had devoted herself to the visitation of the criminals in prison. Her Christian philanthropy was of the most genuine order; and when she was sentenced by Jeffreys to be burned alive at Tyburn, not all the catalogue of his crimes against humanity could persuade the people that the sentence was other than nominal. As she herself said: "My fault was one which a prince might well have for-

given. I did but relieve a poor family, and lo! I must die for it." The atrocious sentence was duly executed. Elizabeth Gaunt was burned at Tyburn, and of all those who were present at that awful scene she appeared to be the most calm and cheerful.

Never had the fortunes of English Nonconformity fallen so low. The Government informers were everywhere. No man could be sure that his most innocent words would not be construed into treason. Conventicles were still held, but, as Lord Macaulay says, under such conditions as prevail when a gang of coiners is at work. The secrecy was absolute; sentinels were posted to give the alarm; no singing was permitted. Trap-doors were devised for the surreptitious withdrawal of the preacher. Notwithstanding all precautions, the informers met with frequent success; and the prisons were constantly replenished with Nonconformist victims surprised in the act of worship. Baxter, as we know, was in Newgate. John Howe had gone with Lord Wharton to the Continent to escape the misery of the time. There he made the acquaintance of William of Orange, to be warned by him how little good was intended to the dissenters from James's subsequent change of policy. Many other good Nonconformists quitted the homeland in despair and removed to America to strengthen the colonies which James hated and was ever seeking to humble. And down in the West of England the bodies of men and women who had loved their Protestant principles better than their lives poisoned the sweet air of Devonshire and made the lanes of Somersetshire hideous. Convict ships were bearing their kith and kin, chained and fettered, to be sold into slavery in the Barbadoes. Yet it is recorded by Mr. Neal that the very severity of the sufferings of the Nonconformists caused some men of

character and influence to renounce the Church of England "as a persecuting establishment, and to take their lot among the Nonconformists." He mentions the Revs. John Spademan, M.A., of Swayton, in Lincolnshire; John Rastrick, vicar of Kirton, near Boston; Mr. Burroughs, of Frampton; Mr. Scoffin, of Brotherton; Mr. Quip, of Moreton, "and a few others." An entry in the diary of George Fox acquaints us with the fact that quite a number of soldiers gave up their commissions in the army rather than be the instruments of the Government's cruelty against peaceable, orderly, and devout folk. That in times so dark some should be found willing to resign their livelihood and their personal security to throw in their lot with the despised and oppressed Dissenters argues well for the impression which the latter were producing upon the country at large by their astonishing constancy and fortitude.

Their ranks were recruited at this time, and the citizenship of England sensibly strengthened, owing to a new outbreak of the spirit of persecution in France. Louis the Fourteenth had shown for many years how deep was his distrust and detestation of Protestantism; and the lot of his Huguenot subjects had been made more and more intolerable. But now the Edict of Nantes, which had been the Protestant charter of France for generations, was revoked, and the Huguenots, left at the mercy of their foes, sought refuge in flight. This policy of Louis was carried out at a time most inopportune for the designs of James in England. For James, bent on securing full toleration for the Roman Catholics in England, this object-lesson of the intolerance of the Romanists toward the Protestants on the Continent was exceedingly awkward. He would willingly have prevented the immigration of the persecuted Huguenots into England if he had dared. But Pro-

testant sympathy was, of course, overwhelmingly with them; and it was to James's interest to win a reputation for tolerance. So it came to pass that many thousands of Huguenot refugees poured into England, and were cordially welcomed by those who had a fellow-feeling for these sufferers for conscience' sake. The loss of France was the gain of England. In one of his most eloquent passages Mr. Lecky says: "Local liberties in France received their death-blow when those who most strenuously supported them were swept out of the country. The destruction of the most solid, the most modest, the most virtuous, and the most generally enlightened element in the French nation prepared the way for the inevitable degradation of the national character; and the last serious bulwark was removed that might have broken the force of that torrent of scepticism and vice which a century later laid prostrate, in merited ruin, both the altar and the throne."

The Houses of Parliament assembled almost immediately after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It was a difficult time for any king to announce that he intended to set aside the law of England in order to show favour to the Roman Catholics. Yet this was the substance of James's speech. He pleaded Monmouth's rebellion as an excuse for ignoring the Test Act and appointing Roman Catholic officers to various commands in the army. The step was, of course, unconstitutional and arbitrary; but what could a House say that had openly and with enthusiasm asserted that resistance to the will of a king was wicked? It was beginning to dawn on the House that an army officered by Roman Catholics could be used at any moment for the subversion of Protestantism in England. Louis the Fourteenth was showing how to destroy the Huguenot power in France. Tory loyalism was narrow

and foolish, but it was intensely devoted to the Church of England as by law established, and feared and hated Romanism. Therefore, when the old problem came back again and they were divided between resisting the King or seeing their religion and civil constitution disappear, they plucked up courage to be less loyalist and more patriotic. James took a high tone with them, but he could not hector them into obedience, and Parliament was prorogued.

It now remained to be seen how far James would venture to go without the concurrence of Parliament. He was showing his hand more clearly every day, but even the unexpected resistance of his ultra-loyalist and Tory Government did not awaken him to a sense of his danger. Collections had been made very generally throughout the churches on behalf of the Huguenot refugees. James decreed that none should participate in the benefit who had not first taken the Sacrament in the Anglican Church. For himself he cared nothing for the Anglican Church, but he chose to express his disapproval of those who had rebelled against Romanism in France by snatching the bread out of their mouths. The King's next move was one that must have been watched with the keenest interest by every intelligent Nonconformist in the land. By the law of England James was the head of the Church. He had no intention of neglecting any of the privileges which that title confers. The question was how much arbitrary power does it confer? Had he the power as head of the Church to appoint Roman Catholics to benefices in the Church by dispensing with all tests so far as they were concerned? He had already taken upon him to dispense with tests and appoint Roman Catholics to office in the army. Why not in the Church? As he did not propose to summon Parliament for a while, he determined to get a decision in his favour from the Judges. To

do this was not easy ; indeed, judges had to be created servile enough to vote that James had the power to ride roughshod over the law of the State and the Church. Still the anomaly of the situation was increasingly manifest. By a Test Act no Roman Catholic could occupy any civil office ; yet a Roman Catholic did occupy the highest office of all, the Kingship. The King was head of the Church, and was he to be told that this headship carried with it no authority ? A bench of judges carefully packed for the purpose declared that James did possess "the dispensing power," whereupon he proceeded to thrust Roman Catholics into livings in the English Church. At the same time four Roman Catholic lords were promoted to the Privy Council. Then the Deanery of Christchurch, Oxford, fell vacant, and a notorious Roman Catholic was appointed to that high and influential position. To enable him to deal more effectively with refractory ecclesiastics, he now daringly revived the Court of High Commission, the abolition of which had been one of the most popular acts of the Long Parliament. A Court of seven with Jeffreys at its head could be kept pliable to the Royal will. He had now the machinery ready to his hand for the accomplishment of his designs. To crown all, a large military force was assembled at Hounslow to overawe London and deal promptly with rioters.

Even so, James encountered unexpected difficulties. Scotland was proving less tame than had been her wont of recent years, and the Episcopalians there could not be persuaded to like the Roman Catholics, even though they were offered the privilege of persecuting the Covenanters to their hearts' content. The parish churches of England rang with denunciations of Rome, though the clergy had been expressly commanded by James to abstain from such controversial sermons. Tracts and

pamphlets in vindication of the Protestant cause could not be suppressed by all the vigilance and menaces of the censor. James had to recognise that the prospect was not hopeful for the success of his schemes; when a policy occurred to him which suddenly threw on the despised Nonconformists the responsibility of saving Protestantism in England.

This was the policy of his famous Declaration of Indulgence, by means of which he proposed to unite all Nonconformists, Protestant and Catholic, against the English Church. Heartily as he loathed them, James knew that his real danger was from the Nonconformists. The Churchmen were bound to their doctrine of passive obedience, and he might rely that their resistance to his innovations would stop short of violence to his person or his crown. But the Nonconformist Puritans were made of sterner stuff. If he could but buy them off his position was secure. Nobody who has not read the details of the quarter of a century of persecution which the English Dissenters had endured since the Restoration can appreciate the force of the temptation now suddenly presented to them. A few weeks ago and they spoke of their faith, if at all, in bated breath. They were hunted like rats from hole to hole. Informers were paid to play the spy upon them. Their persons were imprisoned, their property plundered. They had died by thousands in close confinement; had suffered nameless atrocities at the hands of Jeffreys; had had their nearest kin transported into slavery. Their noblest writers, Baxter, Howe, Bunyan, had shared the common fate. And now, by a sudden turn of the wheel of fortune, they were offered everything for which they had fought and pleaded and suffered and died during all these years. Suddenly, as Macaulay puts it, they found themselves the subject of one of the strangest auctions ever held.

Romanist King and Episcopal Church began to bid against each other for their support. If only they would respond to the overtures of the King, and assure him of their unfaltering loyalty, and all the rest of it, he would guarantee them full liberty for the exercise of their various systems of Church worship and government. Once again they might take their part in civil and military life, once again their preachers might evangelise the country and organise churches. Worn-out with suffering, and weary of endless restrictions and disabilities, this sudden clearing of the sky was welcome beyond all telling. They had only to look at the matter selfishly, as it concerned their own liberty, and permit James to do what he liked in regard to the State Church, and England might very probably have been lost.

Even the stoutest Episcopalian will hardly deny that the way in which the Nonconformists stood the test imposed upon them now deserves something more than bare commendation. James's cruelty had not broken them, and his bribe was equally ineffective. They who had survived hard blows were not deceived by soft and specious speeches. They longed for toleration, and had believed in its justice when they were alone in the belief; but they valued English Protestantism more than their own lives and liberties. It is quite true that there were exceptions. There were some who failed to see through James. There were some, too, whose heads were turned by a little royal distinction. Of such was Stephen Lobb, minister of Fetter Lane Independent Church. He was a man of some parts, but with the courtier spirit, and the notice he received from James threw him off his balance. Of the men who had any right to speak for Nonconformity it may be said that their attitude never wavered. Baxter, Howe, Bunyan let it be known that they would never support James's

claim to the "dispensing" power. In a large gathering of ministers, and while two courtiers were waiting to carry the decision to the Court, John Howe, who had just returned from the Continent, spoke against the pretensions of the King with an earnestness that no Episcopalian could have excelled. The meeting was practically unanimous in supporting Howe, and the courtiers had no satisfactory news to carry back. By dint of much organisation certain addresses were framed and presented to the King politely, and in some cases effusively, acknowledging the toleration promised, but containing none of the desired pledges. As Bishop Burnet admits, only a few "mean and inconsiderable" members of the Nonconformist bodies were caught by the bait of James. His attempt to buy the connivance of the Dissenters had conspicuously failed.

The situation is well illustrated by the story of a famous poem. James had rallied to his support one man of genius. It is not for his consistency that John Dryden shines in history. We have seen how his verses in praise of Cromwell were followed by a pæan in praise of the second Charles. This involved a change of political principles, not a change of religion; but when the occasion seemed to require it he was equal to the latter conversion also. Four years before the date we are dealing with he had written "Religio Laici," a poem in defence of the Church of England and Protestantism generally. Since that date James had come to the throne, and Dryden, like an obedient subject, had taken his religion from this new defender of the faith. He now produced a poem called "The Hind and the Panther." In the poem the Church of Rome was represented by

A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,

while the Church of England was the Panther, "the

fairest creature of the spotted kind." Other characters appeared; for example, "the bloody Bear, the Independent beast"; "the bristled Baptist Boar"; "the Quaking Hare"; and "the insatiate Wolf," the genial symbol for Presbytery. The difficult aspiration of the poet was to show that all these religious bodies were beasts of prey, pursuing their persecuting course, except the "milk-white Hind" of the Church of Rome, and the Quakers, who were too contemptible to count. Where proof was weak, rhythm was strong.

> The harmless hind
> Was never of the persecuting kind,

was an assertion that it must have required some courage to make immediately after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

> O happy regions, Italy and Spain,
> Which never did those monsters entertain.

The monsters are the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, and the mention of the land of Torquemada and Alva is somewhat startling when we remember the argument. The interesting fact is, however, that while Dryden's poem was still unfinished James reversed his policy, and became a suitor for the hand of the Puritans. It was an awkward time to publish a poem that called the Independent a "bloody bear," the Baptist a "bristling boar," and the Presbyterian an "insatiate wolf," so Dryden prefixed a conciliatory preface. It is eminently gracious, and its principles are lofty. "Conscience," we are told, "is the royalty and prerogative of every private man. Those who are driven into the fold are, generally speaking, rather made hypocrites than converts." The Dissenters are adjured not only to receive the Indulgence but to receive it thankfully. They are to consider from whose hand

they have received it, "not from a Cyrus . . . but from a Christian king, their native sovereign, *who expects a return in specie from them.*" Dryden confesses to a hope that the Church of England will take off the Penal Laws and the Test—thus, of course, treating the "milk-white Hind" with the gentleness and confidence she deserves.

Whatever may be thought of Dryden's fable, it is certain that James himself had more of the nature of the panther than the hind. This was proved by his attack on the universities. From no institutions had James received such servile adulation as from Oxford and Cambridge, and by all their public professions the authorities were bound to a policy of non-resistance to his royal will. But the sting of such resolutions was in the application; and when the creed of passive obedience came to be particularly applied, even its meekest disciples became aware of the defects of the dogma. We cannot detail the incidents of a long and fierce struggle which ended in Magdalen College, Oxford, being converted into a Popish seminary; its fellows having been summarily ejected. University College had already been Romanised with an entirely worthless Catholic at its head. Christchurch was now governed by a Roman Catholic dean, who in that capacity was, of course, head of its cathedral. For refusing to suspend the rules of the University of Cambridge in favour of a Benedictine monk, some of the most learned of her authorities were treated by Jeffreys, in the Commission Court, with all the insolence he was wont to manifest towards common felons. The Vice-Chancellor was deprived of his position and all his emoluments. James was doing one thing effectively. He was making it extremely improbable that the Universities would ever believe again that passive

obedience to the worst of monarchs is part of religion. No difficulty or danger dismayed James. He was now bent upon collecting to Westminster a Parliament composed exclusively of men who favoured his designs. It was soon clear that the Lieutenants of the counties were in no mood to aid him. He dismissed them right and left, and forced his creatures into the places thus vacated. But he could not force the gentry of England on to his side. They were Cavaliers almost to a man, but they would not swear to support James in his efforts to Romanise England. The King then set to work to tune the municipalities. He dismissed the existing governors, and in many instances filled their places with those who were benefiting by the Declaration of Indulgence—Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists. These, however, were no more pliable than those they had displaced. The Mayor of Newcastle told the King that "the Dissenters were all knaves and rebels"; and old soldiers of Cromwell who had been made aldermen swore grimly that "blood should flow before popery and arbitrary power were established in England." While James was considering the possibility of destroying the charters of the boroughs entitled to return members for Parliament, he took a further step which resulted in one of the most famous trials in history. He published a new Declaration of Indulgence, with the command that it should be read from every pulpit in the land. In itself the Declaration might be interpreted as a charter conferring freedom of worship. But to read it officially and authoritatively was to concur in the claim of James to be able to set aside the law of the land, and by his own arbitrary will revoke all tests, and reverse all Parliamentary decisions. The Universities had had to unlearn their doctrine of passive obedience. The Church had now to unlearn hers. It was soon

evident that her clergy, with their bishops at their head, were determined to disobey the King. If any thought that to refuse to read the Indulgence was to appear to be in favour of continuing the persecution of the Nonconformists, the attitude of the latter must have decided them. "At this conjuncture," says Macaulay, "the Protestant Dissenters of London won for themselves a title to the lasting gratitude of their country. . . . The Nonconformists of the city, with a noble spirit, arrayed themselves side by side with the members of the Church in defence of the fundamental laws of the realm. Baxter, Bates, and Howe distinguished themselves by their efforts to bring about this coalition; but the generous enthusiasm which pervaded the whole Puritan body made the task easy. The zeal of the flocks outran that of the pastors. Those Presbyterian and Independent teachers who showed an inclination to take part with the King against the ecclesiastical establishment received distinct notice that unless they changed their conduct their congregations would neither hear them nor pay them. . . . Deputations waited on several of the London clergy imploring them not to judge of the dissenting body from the servile adulation which had lately filled the *London Gazette*, and exhorting them, placed as they were in the van of this great fight, to play the man for the liberties of England and for the faith delivered to the saints."

When the Archbishop of Canterbury and six suffragans signed a memorial to the King against the instruction to read the Declaration, James declared it was a standard of rebellion, and committed them to the Tower. It is an interesting fact that in their confinement they were visited by a deputation of ten Nonconformist ministers, who, when they were subsequently sent for by James and upbraided, told him to his face that they would

always stand by those who stood by the Protestant religion. The celebrated trial took place, and the verdict was awaited with indescribable excitement all the country over. When the jury acquitted the bishops the demonstrations of joy from Land's End to John o' Groats rivalled the enthusiasm of the Restoration. One immediate fruit of the great struggle in which Churchmen and Nonconformists stood side by side was a pastoral letter by Archbishop Sancroft, who in the past had been a virulent antagonist of the Dissenters, and enforcer of the penal laws against them, in which "he solemnly enjoined the bishops and clergy to have a very tender regard to their brethren the Protestant Dissenters, to visit them often, to entertain them hospitably, to discourse with them civilly, to persuade them if it might be to conform to the Church, but if that were found impossible to join them heartily and affectionately in exertions for the blessed cause of the Reformation." It was, perhaps, too much to expect of poor human nature that the spirit of this pastoral should continue, and its counsels prevail. But it indicates a sort of armistice in the conflict between the Establishment and Dissent, which, if it had but been improved, might have led up to reconciliation and fraternal co-operation.

Within four months of the trial of the bishops William of Orange set sail for England. At last James was roused to a sense of his danger, and was profuse in his promises of concession and reform. His repentance, if such it was, came too late to save him. Nobody trusted him now. He had alienated his best friends. It was well known in London that William was preparing to come to the rescue of England, and that only contrary winds prevented his sailing There was a period of what the people called " Papist weather "—storms and a westerly

gale. Lord Macaulay relates how the men and women of London prayed for a "Protestant wind." It came at last, and William's fleet sailed up the channel and effected a landing at Torbay in November, 1688. In a few weeks James's supporters had melted away, the King had fled and the bloodless Revolution was an accomplished fact.

CHAPTER XI.

The Revolution and After.

The position and prospects of English Nonconformity were never more interesting than at the Revolution. William of Orange shared to the full the noble convictions of his House as to religious liberty. He was a good Protestant and an ardent Calvinist; and, as so often happens, the measure of his devotion to his own faith was the measure of his desire that other people should be at liberty to cherish theirs. His mistrust of Roman Catholics indeed was invincible. He had suffered much from them, and had been the steady champion of those who were the victims of their persecutions. With his Calvinistic convictions went an attitude of mind in regard to ecclesiastical matters that the High Churchman regarded as dangerously latitudinarian. Disputes about rites and ceremonies, vestments, and posturings, were to William much ado about nothing. Devices of Church government and organisation were expediencies calling for a little common-sense, rather than a sacred and inviolable order delivered to the saints once for all by the apostles. Moreover, his famous declaration to the Scotch Covenanters that he was "never of that mind that violence was suited to the advancing of true religion" was in radical opposition to the tenets of the High Church party, and indeed to the theory of a State Church. Such an attitude of mind was bound to bring him into conflict

WILLIAM III.

(From an old Engraving.)

with the disciples of Archbishop Laud. The High Churchman, indeed, did not love the articles of religion, for they had been made at Geneva, and had too definite a Calvinistic stamp ; but he may almost be said to have worshipped every jot and tittle of the Anglican rubrics, for here was the Church of England's closest point of contact with Rome. The Puritan Churchman, on the other hand, had little love for the rubrics, and evaded them whenever possible ; to him the character of the English Church was determined by her Calvinistic articles. William's ecclesiastical sympathies were Presbyterian, and the Anglican theories of apostolical succession and Episcopal ordination must have appeared to him as superstitious figments. Some of the leading Nonconformists had manifested no reluctance to a modified episcopacy if reasonable liberty were guaranteed to the individual minister in regard to the conduct of public worship and administration of the Sacraments. It was therefore possible that by some well-considered scheme of comprehension there might be a movement back into the bosom of the Church on the part of the most influential Nonconformists. The time would seem to be ripe. The High Churchmen, in defiance of their own sacrosanct doctrine of non-resistance, had withstood the pretensions of James, and their leader, the venerable Archbishop Sancroft, had advised closer co-operation with the Dissenters. The firm stand taken by the prelates had made William's task easy, and a settlement in the spirit of the Archbishop's pastoral seemed naturally to follow. But no sooner was the Calvinist Presbyterian William head of the Church, instead of the Roman Catholic James, than it became evident that the High Churchmen were beginning to repent. The idol of uniformity was threatened. Their favourite ecclesiastical theories were in danger of subversion. The

purity of the Church would be compromised by this Presbyterian leaven. With William on the throne the High Churchmen were driven to realise that they were nearer in spirit and conviction to the Roman Catholic than to the Protestant, and a sentiment for the exiled James began to strengthen in their breasts.

It was clearly necessary that William should proceed with caution. His position was by no means secure. It was humiliating to the military pride of England that he had been seated on his throne largely by his own Dutch troops. He himself seemed to those at Court a somewhat grim and uncouth foreigner, and a prelatical Church disliked his theological temper. William was conscious of elements of dissatisfaction and discontent that could only be conciliated by cautious and tactful dealing. He had warmly responded to an address of welcome presented to him by certain representative Nonconformists, but for the present nothing more could be adventured on their behalf than the chill and condescending provisions of the Toleration Act. This document is so famous in the history of religious liberty that it is necessary to point out how very restricted a freedom it conferred. That no person who took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and subscribed the declaration against transubstantiation should be compelled to attend the services of the Church of England, or be proscribed for meeting in conventicle, was a substantial measure of relief to thousands of Nonconformists, ministerial and lay. Moreover, anyone disturbing a Free Church service could be prosecuted and fined. But if a dissenting minister desired to exercise his calling he must subscribe thirty-four at least of the thirty-nine articles, omitting those relating to ceremonies, the Book of Homilies, and the Ordination Service. He must therefore have no scruples as to the Athanasian

Creed, and he must feel himself at liberty, if such were his convictions, to interpret Calvinistic articles in an Arminian sense. As for the Unitarian, he had as little prospect of indulgence as the Romanist. The Quaker, however, had special treatment. He was released from the taking of oaths, but a solemn declaration against transubstantiation and of loyalty to the Government was to be accompanied by a confession of faith in the Divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and in the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments.

From the welcome extended to the very moderate provisions of this famous statute it is obvious that the bulk of English Nonconformists had not begun to feel those objections to fettering the conscience with finite statements of infinite truths which became so clear and strong in later times. Most of the Arminianism in Nonconformity had found refuge in Quakerism. John Goodwin appears to have had few successors. But there was one distinguished thinker who believed that his theology was the reconciliation of Calvinism and Arminianism, and who had suffered not a little obloquy and abuse for his liberal opinions. This was Richard Baxter, and it was of general interest to know how he would act in this matter of subscription. He appears to have been much exercised in his own mind. Finally he decided to put in a statement of the sense in which he subscribed the articles. This document is interesting and significant. It is a forecast of that remarkable movement towards theological freedom which Nonconformists have led in more recent years. He declared that he accepted only the positive and substantive teaching of the Athanasian Creed, and did not assent to the damnatory clauses; and that he held that unbelievers in Christ who, nevertheless, have lived honest and virtuous lives may be saved by Christ's redemption. We

are told that many of the Dissenting clergy of London concurred in these charitable sentiments. It was almost Baxter's last public act, and it was worthy of the lofty spirit of charity which had distinguished his great career.

The Toleration Act was not the most ambitious measure designed for the well-being of the Dissenters. A Comprehension Bill was introduced into the Upper House. The object of this measure was, of course, so to modify the constitution of the Established Church as to reconcile the Dissenters and heal the existing ecclesiastical divisions. Instead of subscribing the thirty-nine articles a minister could make a declaration of general approval of the "doctrine, worship, and government of the Church of England as by law established, as containing all things necessary to salvation," and a promise "to preach and practise according thereunto." Some ingenuity was manifested in dealing with the crucial question of re-ordination. The laying on of episcopal hands was insisted on, but the formula to be used implied that authority was given thereby to be a minister of the Church of England, and nothing was said to disparage the character of a former ministry. Certain forms and ceremonies were made optional, and a "petition" was added for a commission to revise the liturgy, canons, and constitution of the ecclesiastical Courts.

What might have happened if this Bill had become an Act is an interesting speculation. How many Nonconformists would have been absorbed; what influence they would have had on the Church of England, and what influence that Church would have had upon them—these are problems that cannot be profitably discussed. Had the policy of the Comprehension Bill been persisted in, however, it is certain that the numbers of the non-jurors would have been largely in-

creased; and the very stability of William's throne might have been threatened. Nor is there any evidence of enthusiasm for the Bill on the part of the Nonconformists. Macaulay has a picturesque passage in which he elaborates the point that the Nonconformist divine was better paid and of more consequence in society than he was likely to be if he accepted a living in the Church. The implication is that he was indisposed to be absorbed because of the superiority of his temporalities. Doubtless dissent had become far more powerful, and its ministry in higher repute, since the Declaration of Indulgence. But the indifference of the Nonconformist to comprehension was due to reasons very different from Macaulay's. He had had some considerable experience now of the advantages of ministerial freedom. He was less in love with the liturgy than ever, and more and more indisposed to subject himself and his people to its restrictions. The parochial system fettered him; and, in short, he was beginning to prize at its true value the opportunity to deliver his soul and do his work in his own way. It is necessary to remember also that the Congregational belief as to Church government was gradually coming to prevail. Presbytery, in England, had never been more than a useful expediency, and convenient substitute for prelacy. When Professor Gardiner declares that England has been Episcopal and England has been Independent, but England has never been Presbyterian, this is what he means. The Englishman had no such conviction of the sanctity of presbytery as the Scot. For a time it seemed as if the moderate Episcopalian and the moderate Independent could find shelter together in a Presbyterian Church order, and that this organisation would be an effectual bulwark against a common foe. That presbytery was a divine order and of universal obligation

was never a common belief south of the Tweed. The communities that had got themselves established since St. Bartholomew's day, under the pastoral care of ejected ministers or others, had made discoveries as to the privileges of Church membership; and we may be sure they were in no mind to part with them lightly. All these things have to be taken into account if we are to understand why the proposal for comprehension received such very lukewarm support from Nonconformists generally.

It must have seemed to many as if the heroic age of Nonconformity was passing away, and as if the men of the future would be of lesser stature. John Bunyan had already crossed the river, having died on the eve of the Revolution. He was buried beside John Owen in Bunhill Fields. Owen had gone home five years before. His had been a great figure in the world in Cromwellian days. His theological works were regarded as standard treatises. Notwithstanding the contempt with which dissent was regarded by the authorities, we are told that the coaches of sixty noblemen followed Owen's coffin to the grave, and a vast concourse of people.

Near the end of 1690 another very noble leader of English Nonconformity entered into rest. Few men had endured more of trial and suffering than George Fox; but tribulation had wrought patience, and his day of storm was ending in a "sunset peace." "All is well," he said among his latest words, "the seed of God reigns over all and over death itself." The last letter in his Journal was full of joy that Friends in many lands "are in love, unity, and peace." In a sealed epistle directed to be opened and read after his death he declares with truth that all the meetings of Friends had been "set up by the power and spirit and wisdom of God." It may be said with equal truth that the Society he

founded has never lacked the tokens of God's presence and power. One year after George Fox died, Richard Baxter attained the saints' rest he had so long anticipated. He was seventy-six years of age and had passed through many and great vicissitudes. His last hours were marked by tranquillity and hope. When the end was approaching he was asked by a friend how he did. "Almost well," he replied. Baxter's life covered by far the greater part of the seventeenth century. Let any one who wishes to acquaint himself with the true history of spiritual life in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries read Baxter's autobiography, George Fox's Journal, and the Journal of John Wesley, and he will get the history he seeks told at first-hand. John Howe lived fifteen years longer, but he was already beginning to appear one of the patriarchs of Nonconformity. The old generation was passing. What had the new generation in store for England ?

Many as have been the varieties of Nonconformists in England, the new variety produced by the Revolution was perhaps the most singular of all. It is impossible to award anything but honour to those who made considerable sacrifices for conscience' sake ; but it is equally impossible to feel any great sympathy to-day with non-jurors, the ecclesiastics who refused the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, resigned their benefices in the Church of England and set up conventicles of their own. In all there were about four hundred and fifty who took this decisive step. Among them men like Bishop Ken, and the Revs. Jeremy Collier and Henry Dodwell, had claims to real distinction of piety and learning. Archbishop Sancroft was a lesser man who had become a hero by accident, as it were, at the time of the celebrated trial, when he played a part as the defender of British liberties, for which he had no

qualification in temperament and sympathy. Dodwell deserves some attention as one of the first ecclesiastics in England to deny the natural immortality of man. He taught that baptism at sacerdotal hands conferred immortality on the recipient. Hence all the heathen had their lot with the beasts that perish, but Dissenters, having refused the offered privilege, were kept alive after death by a special act of God in order that they might be suitably tormented. The non-jurors were treated by the King and Parliament with leniency, and with every disposition to conciliate them. They were allowed six months to make up their minds. If they were still resolute they were to be suspended, but allowed another six months of reflection before being deprived. Some of them, as we have said, were men of exemplary life and high attainments, but very many of them were of low calibre and adapted rather to the life of intrigue they were henceforth to live in Tory coffee-houses than to the pastoral care of souls. Their secession had an element of speculation in it. They looked forward to the day when James Stuart would return to the throne of his fathers, and they would have their reward. Throughout the stormy days of William's reign there was not a plot hatched, or a conspiracy organised, but some of the non-jurors were concerned in it. It is notable, however, that there was no lay secession to correspond to this clerical one; nor did the non-juror conventicles play any such part in the religious life of England as the Nonconformist conventicles. But the non-jurors remained a thorn in the side of William and his administration, to circulate scandals, foment discord, exaggerate difficulties, and rub vinegar into every sore in the State. While they were making up their minds to stand out for a bad king and the hereditary succession, rather than a good king

who had come by revolution, Ireland was in arms for James, who saw in its Roman Catholic citizens his only hope of getting back his crown; and Londonderry had closed its gates, and for one hundred and five days had endured its ever-memorable siege, and saved the Protestant situation in Ireland. In Scotland William had other troubles. The Covenanters, who for so long had been crushed beneath the heel of an episcopal system which they hated as being not only prelatical but foreign, had turned with fierceness upon their adversaries, and were abusing their new advantage. How the old Cavalier enthusiasm found its representative in Dundee, and how he died in the moment of his triumph at Killiecrankie, so that the fruits of victory were gathered by those he had defeated, is too well known to need detailed description here. When William received the Crown of Scotland, and was required to take the oath pledging him to destroy all heretics, he made the explicit and emphatic declaration, "I will not lay myself under any obligation to be a persecutor." He was assured that the words of the oath contained no such implication. "In that sense then I swear," he said, "and I desire you all, my lords and gentlemen, to witness that I do so." It must always remain to his credit that William was resolute to dissociate Protestantism from the persecuting spirit.

While the minds of the non-jurors were being exercised by the problem of conformity, the Nonconformists had a similar problem of their own, which was debated with some heat, and may even be said to have divided them into two schools. Let it be remembered that the Corporation Act and the Test Act were still in force. Nobody could hold any civil office who had not first taken the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. No greater degradation of the most sacred rite

of Christendom can be conceived than to make it the qualification for political or municipal office. Men were tempted now to participate in this solemn and awful feast, not by reason of any spiritual motive, but simply because it was a form to be complied with that they might enjoy the distinction or emoluments of public service. It is impossible not to sympathise with the righteous indignation of William Cowper's lines:

> Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
> The Saviour's feast, His own blest bread and wine,
> And made the symbols of atoning grace
> An office-key, a picklock to a place,
> That infidels may make their title good
> By an oath dipped in Sacramental blood?

It was no secret that numbers of Nonconformists, in leaving the Church of England, had lost none of their reverence for her Communion Service, and had kept up an occasional intercourse with the Church of their fathers by means of this service whenever it was open to them to do so. Baxter, Howe, and Philip Henry may be cited as examples of those who thus occasionally "conformed." But the idea of communicating in order to get some worldly advantage by so doing was naturally repugnant to the conscience and feeling of the more high-minded Nonconformists. At the same time the dilemma created by the law was that they must take the Communion in the parish church, or else consent to be outlawed from English citizenship, and deprived of all opportunities of public usefulness. The dilemma was a difficult and a cruel one, and it is no matter of surprise that it created sharp differences of opinion. One Lord Mayor took the Sacrament, and then hied him to his meeting-house in his official robes. This was none other than Sir Thomas Abney, a member of John Howe's church. His action had the effect of calling forth a pamphlet on "The

DANIEL DEFOE.

(From an old Engraving.)

Practise of Occasional Conformity," from one who was to be for many years to come one of the most notorious men in the realm. This was Daniel Defoe, novelist and writer of pamphlets civil and religious, or as some would prefer to say, civil and uncivil. The son of a Nonconformist, he was educated for the ministry at the academy of a Mr. Morton on Newington-green, one of those early private colleges for the education of their ministry which Nonconformists established and sustained. In after years Defoe seems to have regarded it as a "disaster" that he did not enter the ministry. The circumstance will hardly be felt as such by those who acquaint themselves with his restless and unstable character. Yet his "academic" training did much for him. It taught him to write English, and indoctrinated him with anti-prelatic and anti-despotic opinions which were the cause of many troubles and losses to him, but which governed his somewhat erratic course to the last. He nearly lost his life at the outset by complicity in Monmouth's rebellion. Two or three of his class-mates in Mr. Morton's academy suffered among the victims of Jeffreys, but Defoe, with difficulty, escaped. He was shrewd enough not to be duped by James's Declaration of Indulgence, and boldly maintained to his fellow-Dissenters that "he had rather the Church of England should pull our clothes off by fines and forfeitures than the Papists should fall both upon the Church and the Dissenters, and pull our skins off by fire and faggot." Early in William's reign he came to grief financially, but received a public appointment later on, and his pen was steadily at the service of the King in advocacy of William's schemes. His onslaught on the occasional Conformists was really a sermon on the text, "If the Lord be God follow Him, but if Baal then follow him," and his argument was that Dissent was a sin if occasional Conformity was defensible;

and, on the other hand, if Dissent was a just position, conformity occasional or otherwise was a sin. There was a possible reply to Defoe, but it may be questioned whether it was made successfully. John Howe, to whom Defoe's pamphlet was addressed, was too angry with the author to do justice to his plea, and the pamphlet in which he takes Defoe to task lacks the serenity and charity which distinguish his writings. It has been well said, however, that it is a singular tribute to Howe's genuine catholicity of spirit that the one occasion on which he lost his temper was in defence of the Church from which he was a Dissenter. The question of occasional conformity was to come up in an aggravated form when the death of William had removed from English life the strongest obstacle to renewed persecution of the Nonconformists.

This event happened in the second year of the eighteenth century, in March, 1702. William, the strong, generous, uncouth, awkward Dutchman, had never loved England, and had never won the affection of his subjects as a whole. But few monarchs have ever occupied the English throne who have fulfilled so well the ancient precept, "to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God." That he spoke English with difficulty, and had no liking for brilliant Court functions or gorgeous ecclesiastical ceremonial, made him an object of dislike and contempt to those who had not the insight to perceive and admire simplicity and sincerity of character. Absolutely fearless of danger, he had an almost womanly tenderness, and could not endure the thought of cruelty and persecution in any form. The freedom of speech he permitted was employed by Jacobite wits to satirise his personal defects. There has, perhaps, been no "dissidence of dissent" equal to that of some non-jurors, and the scurrilous jests of the coffee-houses were freely

whispered about town. One writer, however, appeared on the scene to turn the laugh of England against William's detractors. Daniel Defoe's "True-Born Englishman" was a satire in verse. The wit has lost a good deal of its flavour by keeping, and it is difficult for us to understand its immense success as a squib. But as a retort upon those who were openly sneering at William because he was Dutch and not a "true-born Englishman," Defoe's verses were unanswerable. He shows what a mongrel person the true-born Englishman is, product of how many nationalities; and then, with real spirit and humour, represents this compound as depreciating the birth of a Dutchman.

> A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
> In speech an irony, in fact a fiction.

Defoe's hit told. He became famous as a wit. Eighty thousand copies of his verses are said to have been sold in the streets, and his vanity was immensely flattered and strengthened thereby.

It was fit that William should have for champion so vigorous a Dissenter as Defoe, for during his beneficent and tolerant reign Nonconformity had advanced by leaps and bounds. Under the shelter of the Toleration Act the meeting-house began to play an important part in the life of the people, and the position of its minister was assured. Some idea of the rapid extension of the Nonconformist interest throughout the kingdom may be gathered from the simple fact that in the twelve years between the Revolution and 1700, *two thousand four hundred and eighteen* dissenting places of worship had been licensed; and Defoe, with a brilliant stroke of that imagination which created "Robinson Crusoe," declared that the Nonconformists numbered two millions, and were the wealthiest part of the community!

We have seen that efforts were being made to provide suitable education for those who had the ministry in view. Such academies were multiplied, a minister of learning frequently taking several young men under his charge. It should be said that a zeal for education had manifested itself among Nonconformists even when they were still under the cloud of persecution. On his release from his severest imprisonments in 1667 George Fox had urged upon Friends to establish a school for boys at Waltham, and another for girls at Shacklewell, "for instructing them in whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation." How much or how little was covered by this quaint phrase we have no means of knowing; but it is only fair to point out that the opposition of Friends to the idea that learning is necessary to make a "gospel minister" is no reason for crediting them with indifference to education. The testimony of Thomas Ellwood, Milton's friend, has been quoted to the effect that he allowed his early opportunities of learning to be unimproved, and never discovered how great his loss was until he became a Friend. In the latter years of James II.'s reign a Nonconformist school was founded in Gravel Lane, Southwark, "for the instruction of children in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls in sewing and knitting, and furnishing them with books for their instruction in these arts, and with Testaments, catechisms, and Bibles." It was specially designed for the children of the poor, and was to indoctrinate them with sound Protestant principles, but "without distinction of party." Mr. Neal asserts that "it was the first institution of the kind wherein the Protestant Dissenters were concerned." It was a success from the first, and received the flattery of many imitations. We may take notice that towards the close

of William's reign a tract appeared entitled "A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians, in Four Letters to a Friend." It is admitted to have been temperately and fairly written, and to have defended Unitarianism by the appeal to Scripture. It was a sign of the times; significant as demonstrating the enlarged liberty of the Press, and also as pointing towards the movement to Unitarianism that was so powerfully to affect many Free Churches calling themselves Presbyterian at no distant period.

The accession of Anne, second daughter of James II., to the throne, inaugurated a reign which went far to undo the benefits of William's tolerance. Anne was a weak person intellectually, and proportionately obstinate in her prejudices, which were of the stiffest Tory and High Church character. These prejudices she did nothing to disguise, and there is no doubt that she regarded the Dissenters with pious horror, and would have rejoiced to see their liberties reduced. During the greater part of her reign, however, the war with France was being waged which advanced the fame of Marlborough to so great a height, and Anne was much under the influence of Marlborough's wife, whose Whig opinions were pronounced. The Whig party in Parliament, moreover, was strong enough to prevent any serious invasion of the rights secured at the Revolution. Before the end of the reign Marlborough's renown had faded, and his wife had been supplanted in her influence over the Queen. The Tory spirit dominated Parliament, and it seems probable that only the death of Anne and the Hanoverian succession saved England from a retrograde movement that would have imperilled the dearly-bought liberties of Englishmen. The early attempts to prevent Nonconformists qualifying for public office by "occasional conformity" were defeated

by the Whig majority of the House of Lords. Defoe scandalised his fellow-Dissenters somewhat by advocating the Bill. As one who had objected altogether to the practice of occasional conformity, he cannot be accused of inconsistency. His recommendation at this time was that Dissenters should acquiesce in their exclusion from all public offices, and be content with such toleration as they possessed. When, however, the agitation against the Dissenters was in full cry, he wrote and published his most famous pamphlet, "A Short Way with Dissenters." The pamphlet was anonymous, and purported to be the work of an extreme High Churchman who seriously recommended that all Dissenters should be expatriated and their ministers hanged. Charles I. had suffered for his indulgence to Dissenters, who had grown powerful and taken his life. "We have been huffed and bullied with your Act of Toleration; you have told us that you are the Church established by law as well as others; have set up your canting synagogues at our church doors." So the pamphlet runs on, and concludes: "The time of mercy is past; your day of grace is over; you should have practised peace and moderation and charity if you expected any yourselves."

The High Churchmen did not find Defoe's pamphlet too strong meat. On the contrary, many of them hailed it with enthusiasm as sound doctrine. The Dissenters were aghast. But who was the author? It was impossible that the secret should be kept. It began to be rumoured abroad that it was all a hoax, a daring caricature of High Church intolerance, and that the writer was that particularly aggressive Dissenter, Daniel Defoe. The law was set in motion against him. The tract was burned by the common hangman, and he himself was fined, and sentenced to stand in the pillory

three days. If the latter punishment could ever be a pleasant one it must have been so to Defoe. For three days he was the centre of admiring and applauding crowds, who showered flowers upon him and quaffed wine in his honour, reciting with gusto a "Hymn to the Pillory" which the irrepressible Defoe had printed. He was exalted to be a popular hero and martyr. Daniel in the lion's den was hardly the subject of more admiration than Daniel in the pillory. Sober Dissenters, however, might be forgiven the feeling that Defoe had done their cause no good.

It was some years later that the violent Tory and High Church re-action set in which had such disastrous consequences to English Nonconformity. Into all the contributing causes we need not enter. Marlborough's unpopularity and ambition, and various Whig indiscretions, together with the influx of foreign refugees prepared the tinder, and the spark was applied by the notorious Dr. Sacheverell. It is proverbial that they are often fiercest against Nonconformity who have owed most to its influence. We are therefore not surprised to learn that Dr. Sacheverell was the grandson of a Dissenting minister who suffered imprisonment in the reign of Charles II. He seems to have owed his position as rector of St. Saviour's, Southwark, less to his character or capacity than to the advantages of an impressive figure, sonorous voice, and stately bearing. Having the opportunity of preaching to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in St. Paul's, he devoted his sermon to a fiery vindication of the doctrine of non-resistance. For this he was most foolishly impeached at the bar of the House of Lords. This absurd piece of seeming intolerance caused an explosion of popular feeling, and Dr. Sacheverell became the idol of the hour. The ladies appear to have been especially devoted to his person and his cause. Defoe

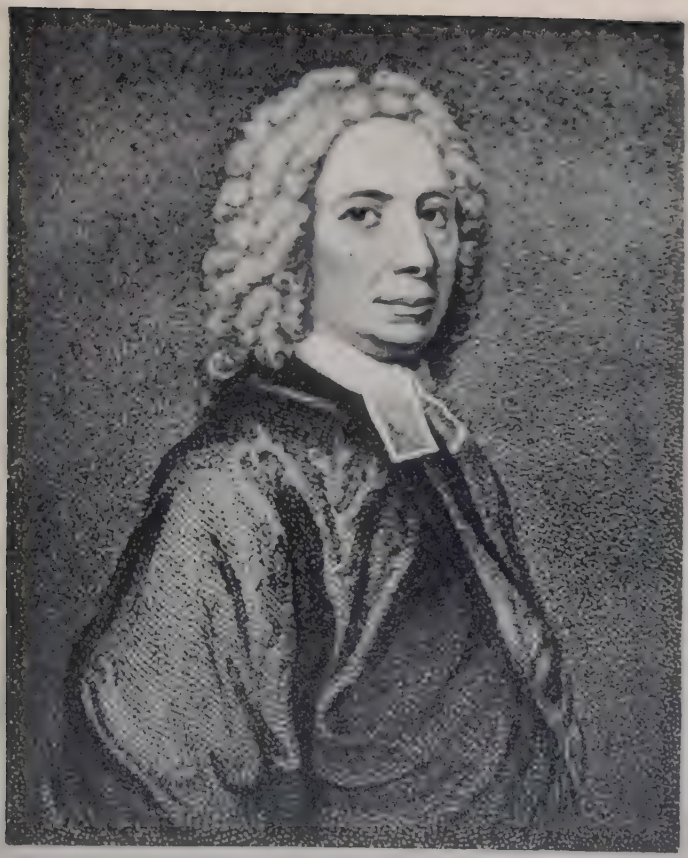
wittily describes how "little Miss has Dr. Sacheverell's picture put into her Prayer-book that God and the Doctor may take her up in the morning before breakfast. . . . This new invasion of the politician's province is an eminent demonstration of the sympathetic influence of the clergy upon the sex, and the near affinity between the gown and the petticoat. . . . As soon as you pinch the parson he holds out his hand to the ladies for assistance, and they appear as one woman in his defence." Where the feminine interest was so deeply enlisted in his behalf it would have been ungallant of the men to have been laggards. The Dissenting meeting-houses seemed to challenge attack. When Sacheverell's sermon was ordered to be burned, and he himself was suspended from preaching for three years, mob-law prevailed all over England. Everywhere damage was done to the property of Nonconformists. Old Daniel Burgess one of the best-known figures in London, was minister of New Court Chapel. The mob swept in to the place, wrecked it, and made a huge bonfire of the wreckage at Lincoln's Inn Fields. An equally conspicuous figure in English Nonconformity at the time was Thomas Bradbury, the minister of Fetter Lane Chapel. It was too much to expect that he would escape the attentions of the mob. He did indeed escape the violence intended to himself, but his meeting-house was burned to the ground. As for Sacheverell, he made a triumphal progress down to a living provided for him in Shropshire, and the always Royalist West-Midlands greeted him with transports of enthusiasm. Such ebullitions of feeling would have been in themselves of small account. But the opportunity was too good to be lost. A general election gave the power absolutely into the hands of the Tories. and new repressive measures against the Nonconformists were the firstfruits. The

THOMAS BRADBURY.

(*From an old Engraving.*)

Occasional Conforming Act passed in 1711. It was thereby enacted that no person could continue to hold public office or trust who attended a conventicle during the time of holding it ; and by doing so he would render himself incapable of public employment until he could show that he had not attended a conventicle for a year. A peculiarly base provision was that any offender should pay £40, which should be given to the informer ! This measure was odious enough, but there was worse to follow. The Schism Act of 1714 was one of the most scandalous measures of English history. It aimed at suppressing Nonconformist seminaries and schools. These seminaries, Mr. Lecky declares, appear to have been ably conducted, and he mentions the notable fact that Archbishop Secker and Bishop Butler received part of their education at "the Dissenting Academy of Tewkesbury." But the more efficient they were, the greater the peril to Anglicanism ; and indeed it was roundly confessed that to secure the Tory and Church cause, Dissent must not be allowed to propagate itself. Accordingly all school-teachers and tutors had to be licensed by a bishop, must conform to the Anglican liturgy, and take the Sacrament in church once a year. If such a teacher attended any other form of worship than the Anglican, he would be liable to three months' imprisonment and disqualified from teaching for the future. If any Catechism were taught other than that of the Church of England, full penalties would be exacted. It is a remarkable fact that Queen Anne died on the very day when the Schism Act came into operation. There is a famous story of how Thomas Bradbury, of Fetter Lane, met Bishop Burnet that morning in Smithfield. Bradbury had a dejected air, and when Burnet enquired the reason he confessed that he had been wondering whether if Smithfield fires were

re-lighted he himself would have the courage to suffer. Then Burnet told him the Queen was at the point of death, and promised to send a messenger who should drop a handkerchief from the gallery if the event occurred at the time of Divine service. The signal was duly given; and Bradbury made the announcement from the pulpit, proclaimed King George as the Queen's successor, and led the congregation in the eighty-ninth Psalm, that sublime pæan in honour of the establishment of "the throne of David." To this story Mr. Lecky adds that Bradbury attended with a deputation of Nonconformist ministers to present an address of welcome to George I. In the vestibule of the palace, Bolingbroke met the deputation, conspicuous in their black Geneva gowns amid the pageantry of the place. "Is this a funeral?" he asked, sarcastically. "No, my lord," said Bradbury, triumphantly, "not a funeral, but a resurrection." Another version gives the retort as "the funeral of the Schism Act, my lord, and the resurrection of liberty." Yet the Act was not so easily buried. Demonstrations against George took the form of riots in which Dissenting meeting-houses were destroyed. Bradbury was not called to suffer at Smithfield, but his effigy was burned; and a similar honour was done to several of his brethren. "In most of the towns of Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire, the Nonconformist chapels were wrecked." However, the abortive Jacobite rebellion of 1715 changed all that, and created a wholesome re-action throughout the land. The Whigs came back into power, and were not dislodged from their supremacy until the reign of George III. During that period much was done to secure the Nonconformist in reasonable rights. We must retrace our steps somewhat to note an event which had little in common with the exciting incidents we have been chronicling, but which had immense influ-



Isaac Watts, D.D.

ISAAC WATTS.

(*From an old Engraving.*)

ence on Christian worship among all denominations. In the year 1707 there was given to the world a little volume of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, written by Isaac Watts. "The English Independents," says Lord Selborne, "as represented by Dr. Watts, have a just claim to be considered the real founders of modern English hymnody." Undoubtedly the fact that the English Reformation had owed more to Calvin than to Luther had restrained the development of Church song. Luther had said "I would love to see all the arts, but especially music, in the service of Him Who has given and created them," but Sternhold and Hopkins' Psalms, and later Tate and Brady's version, had represented the climax of achievement in congregational psalmody. *Te Deums*, canticles, and anthems, of course, there were, sufficient we must suppose in Milton's case to "dissolve" him "into ecstasies"; and occasionally to subdue or exalt the vivacious temperament of Mr. Samuel Pepys. But in the writing of hymns, such Lutherans as Gerhardt, Franck, and Scheffler gave a lead to the other Reformed Churches. If common tradition is to be credited, it was in early years at Southampton that Watts' ear was so offended by the doggerel verse sung in public worship, that he expressed his indignation, and was challenged to produce something better. He sat down and wrote the hymn beginning

Behold the glories of the Lamb.

Watts was a man of very delicate health. He became assistant to Dr. Chauncey at Mark Lane in 1698, and succeeded him four years later. In 1704 the congregation removed to Pinner's Hall, and in 1708 to Bury-street. In 1712, in his broken health, he was invited by Sir Thomas Abney to pay him and his family a visit. He went for a few days and stayed thirty-six years, dying there in 1748. That Watts as a hymn-

writer is unequal is a trite criticism; he sometimes descends to doggerel as intolerable as that he was concerned to supplant. But nobody has ever written finer hymns. "Our God, our help in ages past," "When I survey the wondrous cross," "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," "Before Jehovah's awful throne" are glorious Christian lyrics which congregations will sing with fervour and delight to the end of time. The strength of these early hymns was that they were not subjective and introspective, but were the genuine outgoing of the spirit in faith and worship. Their most common defect was a tendency to be too theological and didactic. The fate of the unbeliever was luridly depicted, and the representations of heaven were dominantly materialistic. The best of them, however, became immortal by virtue of the wealth of spiritual feeling and experience that is in them. It must be said in all candour that with the rise of congregational hymnody came a new danger. It was the danger that a crude theology might impose itself upon the mind of the Church by the medium of the hymns it sings. Verses of Watts and Doddridge, Toplady and Wesley began to be quoted as if their inspiration was as indubitable as that of Paul or John. To question the sentiments of a popular hymn was almost as dangerous a line to take as to challenge the authenticity of the Gospels. "Let me write the hymns of a Church," Dr. Dale once said, "and I care not who writes the theology." Sermons may be negative in their teaching, but the true hymn is always positive. The danger that a church will take its theology from its hymns, even though the authors have no qualification for the task, has been sensibly reduced by the noble catholicity that characterises the modern hymn-book. Hymns by Calvinists and Arminians, Unitarians, Quakers, Roman Catholics,

become in turn the vehicles of the praise and prayer, aspiration and confession that mingle in the psalmody of a modern congregation. Free Church hymn-books emphasise in the most striking way the fact which Nonconformists are under some temptation to forget, that they, too, belong by inheritance to the communion of saints and the Holy Catholic Church.

While Watts was laying the whole Church of Christ under lasting obligations by thus revolutionising Church worship, another Nonconformist divine was quietly and laboriously completing a work of the highest value and significance. One of the ejected ministers of 1662 was Philip Henry, who suffered not a little for his Puritanism. His mind was full of quaint, racy, ingenious ideas, some of which have come down to us. It was immediately after his ejection from the living of Worthenbury that his son Matthew was born. The difficulty of exercising a Nonconformist ministry almost drove Matthew Henry to the law; but with the Declaration of Indulgence he saw an opportunity to fulfil the ideal of his youth. His life ministry was spent at Chester, where he devoted himself to the systematic instruction of his people. The unique feature of his work was a week-night lecture. The scheme he set before himself was heroic. It was nothing less than to expound the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, a task which he accomplished in twenty years of close and consecutive exposition. This prepared the way for the gigantic literary undertaking to which he now proposed to consecrate his remaining years, an Exposition of the Old and New Testaments. He lived to complete five folio volumes, which brought the great work down to the end of the Acts of the Apostles, at which point death interrupted his labours, in April, 1714. Matthew Henry's commentary became the standard of

exposition, and held its supremacy for generations. He had a singularly full and fertile mind; and abounded in felicitous illustrations and quotations drawn from many fields. His Commentary found its way on to the shelves of ministers of every ecclesiastical order; and to preach a sermon without quoting Matthew Henry was almost as grave an offence as to take a text and make no reference to the context.

Despite such outstanding services to religion, however, there is no doubt that the Nonconformist churches and ministers generally were beginning to reflect the prevalent temper of the time. Toleration in the State had come to mean an attitude of mind which regarded no belief as worth fighting for, and all religious forms as equally good or equally bad. Religious zeal seemed to have exhausted itself in the long and fervent controversies of the past century, and to have given way to a placid and equable frame of soul to which enthusiasm was at least as foreign as indifference. In politics, the rise of Walpole to power was ominous of much. He had his virtues in his love of peace, and his eminently tolerant mind; but his contempt for the ethics of government, his notorious and open immorality, his success in "organising corruption into a system," and debasing the standard of public life in the minds of the young, made his ascendency fruitful of moral mischief in the State. Against such an influence there should have been a "Nonconformist conscience," but it cannot be said that it made itself audible to any considerable degree. Mr. Lecky suggests that, acting on his maxim that most men have their price, Walpole had bribed the Dissenters by means of the *Regium Donum*, as it was called, a sum of money from the Exchequer in aid of the widows of Nonconformist ministers. The transaction, indeed, does no credit to the representative

Dissenters who were concerned in it, and who were afterwards not a little mortified at the publicity it obtained. Dr. Edmund Calamy, a very courtly, very scholarly, and, as he desired should be known, a very "moderate" Dissenter, to whom, however, Nonconformity was greatly indebted for much wise guidance and able defence, devotes some ingenious arguments to the justification of the grant, which amounted to about £1,000 a year. He succeeded in showing that certain Nonconformists had received public moneys before for their poor. Others, however, had as emphatically refused them, and the very secrecy of the proceedings proves the existence of disquietude of conscience in regard to them. It was certainly deplorable that at a time when the Nonconformists should have been freest to deal searchingly with public corruption and the degradation of politics they should have been compromised by some of their representatives who had accepted with gratitude what Walpole cynically regarded as their "price." This declension from the rigorous ethical standards of Commonwealth times was symptomatic of a coldness and lethargy, or, as they would perhaps have preferred to say, a "moderation," which had profoundly affected the spirit of Nonconformity. Every genuine Free Church movement is the result of certain deep sovereign convictions driving men and women to revolt against the restrictions and conventions and formalisms of an Established Church. Religious revival produces Nonconformists as inevitably as the spring calls the trees into foliage. New thought, new faith, new method are the creation of a spirit of awakening, and must have liberty in which to realise themselves. In Wales the evangelical revival was led by devout Churchmen, but it crystallised into Nonconformist

communities. Wesley fought all his life against the irresistible tendency for the spiritual life that followed his teaching to seek for itself new channels of faith and activity beyond the boundaries of the Establishment. But because this is true there is a complementary truth, namely, that stagnation of religious life, while it affects injuriously the Established Church, is fatal to Nonconformity. Churches that are a spiritual product of the full tide of religious faith are left stranded and desolate at the ebb. It is certain that at this period some of the more prominent doctrines of Calvinism were ceasing to be credible, and that religious thought was not vigorous enough to fling off the old husks and clothe itself anew. It was an age of drift, when vital changes of belief were regarded with comparative unconcern. During a period of this kind a large proportion of the Presbyterian churches of England settled down into Unitarianism. It must not be supposed that, even when the spiritual movement that had created English Nonconformity had largely spent itself, such a defection as this could take place without protest. In the year 1693 a deputation of Dissenting ministers had actually waited on William to urge him to prohibit the publication of any book of Socinian views. That this spirit was not easily subdued may be gathered from the case of Thomas Emlyn, who had had a Dissenting congregation in Lowestoft. Accepting a pastorate in Dublin, he does not appear to have felt obliged to announce to his new congregation that he had become a Unitarian; but the fact was discovered, he was forbidden by his presbytery to preach, and subsequently was arrested, tried, and sentenced to a fine of £1,000, and to go to prison until it was paid. The sarcasms of the latitudinarian bishop Hoadly on this incident have been quoted. The bishop confessed that the Established Church had some ability in

prosecutions—"for I must not call them *per*secutions!"—but he was willing to do the Dissenters the justice to say they were "very ready to assist us in so pious and Christian a work." "The Nonconformists accused him (Emlyn), the Conformists condemned him, the secular power was called in, and the cause ended in an imprisonment and a very great fine, two modes of *conviction* about which the Gospel is silent." It is certain that Unitarianism had made some progress among the Presbyterians and the General Baptists. The latter body produced several ministers of distinction who openly avowed Unitarian opinions. The Established Church expelled two men of first-rate ability, William Whiston and Samuel Clarke, for the same "heresy." The real battle, however, arose in connection with the Rev. James Peirce, of Exeter. Peirce was a Presbyterian minister, whose Unitarianism, if so it can be called, was originally of the very faintest complexion. He professed his belief in the divinity and eternity of the Son and Spirit, only insisting on the Scriptural teaching of their subordination to the Father, as expressed in the saying of Jesus, "My Father is greater than I." There were four Presbyterian Churches in Exeter, and opinion was so much divided as to what was and what was not orthodoxy on this point that an appeal was made to London. More than one hundred and fifty London ministers assembled to debate the point, but some of the most influential—Calamy, Watts, Neal, and others—suspecting the right or the wisdom to constitute a court of appeal on questions of creed, refused to sanction the proceedings. On February 19, 1719, the conference met at Salters' Hall. A motion by Thomas Bradbury, that every minister present should subscribe the first article on the Trinity contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, split the conference at the start into two bodies,

whose deliberations were carried on separately. They were nearly equal in point of numbers, and were known as subscribing and non-subscribing assemblies. In view of the subsequent strong development of antipathy to the imposition of creeds among the Congregationalists, it is interesting to see that at this time they constituted the bulk of the subscribers, and took the fiercest line against the Unitarians. Both these conferences drew up "advices for peace," and there was not much serious difference between them. That if the minister's views and those of his congregation were seen to be out of harmony he and they should quietly withdraw from each other, was the dictate of common sense and Christian charity. Before these "advices" were received, however, the very people who had invited them had proceeded to action. The trustees of Peirce's church, acting in a manner that was clearly unconstitutional, without consultation with either the church or the congregation, locked the doors against the minister, and eventually he and the majority of his flock withdrew and built themselves a fold elsewhere. The zeal of the trustees had done their cause no good. It was soon apparent that sympathy with the ejected minister was general. There was no longer sufficient force of faith behind the Trinitarian standards to keep them alive. One after another the Presbyterian churches in the West of England went over to the Unitarians, carrying their chapel properties with them. In London, in Lancashire, in Cheshire a similar phenomenon was witnessed. As has been said, the Presbyterian denomination "vanished as suddenly as it had arisen." The Church of the Assembly's catechism and confession became in too many cases the Church of a vague humanitarianism, a Church whose members had eliminated from their beliefs every characteristic Christian

doctrine except the unity of God and the humanity of Jesus.

That there were not a few to prophecy the impending decline and fall of Dissent was not singular. Prominent public men did not hesitate to predict the decline and fall of Christianity. Shaftesbury declared that the Christian religion was an invention of the clergy for their own aggrandisement, and cynically described the Scriptures as "witty and humorous books." The government of the world under heathen rule he considered, on the whole, superior to its government under Christian auspices. David Hume declared that the people had "settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters that is to be found in any nation of the world." The Church fell back upon the unambitious argument that religion is, on the whole, reasonable; and the celebrated Toland was concerned to prove that Christianity was "not mysterious," a thesis for which he suffered some obloquy, but which undoubtedly reflected the prevailing sentiment. This excessive latitudinarianism in regard to theological opinions was favourable only for some improvement of the existing toleration laws. The very useful body known as the "Protestant Dissenting Deputies" was organised, in 1732, to secure the repeal of such statutory scandals as the Test and Corporation Acts. For this achievement, however, the country had still long to wait. Behind all great reformations in the State there must be intense and enlightened religious feeling. The spiritual movement was about to begin in England which was to call into activity moral forces before which slavery would disappear, the British constitution would be broadened and strengthened, and those harsh measures in which the spirit of intolerance against Dissent had incarnated itself would disappear from the statute-book for ever.

CHAPTER XII.

The Great Revival.

There is no disposition in any quarter to deny the serious condition of English life during the greater part of the eighteenth century. The attenuation of faith had meant the paralysis of moral power, and an inanimate Church made but little effort to stem the profligacy of the State. The slumber of the Church was profound, and for a full generation thoughtful minds might hesitate to say, "this sleep is not unto death." We have seen how fatal an indifference had crept over the spirit of Nonconformity, until society after society had taken refuge in a colourless theology. The Church of Christ in England, in all its branches, had lost its grasp of any effectual faith. It could offer men neither inspiration in life nor comfort and help in death. Christianity in England had almost ceased to count. It was no longer the miracle-working faith it had been, grappling boldly with the darkest problems, and seeing in every sinner a possible saint. The high Calvinist might still congratulate himself that God had His elect, of which he was one; and might see in the manifest ungodliness of the multitude the effect of the Divine reprobation. But, if so, there was all the greater need for some men to arise who would believe and teach that it was not the will of God that any should perish, and that there was a power unto salvation in the Gospel of Christ to which the vice and

immorality of the land would yield. One considerable effort had indeed been made to put the laws into execution against notorious evil-doers. Churchmen and Dissenters united to form the "Society for the Reformation of Manners." For many years a spirited campaign against vice was conducted; prosecutions and convictions were numerous; a small army of amateur detectives came to the assistance of the regular police, to cleanse the streets, and put down immorality, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and other offences. A hundred thousand convictions were obtained in London and Westminster chiefly for "open debauchery and profanity." Finally an adverse decision, involving the society in heavy legal expenses, broke the spirit of the promoters and brought the endeavour to a close. In fact, these well-meant efforts to reform England by law were bound to fail unless some higher forces could be brought into activity at the same time. England needed law less than grace. She needed a revival of faith; she needed a direct appeal to her soul. The attempt to root out evils is sure to fail of success if there is no real conscience against them. To awaken the conscience and create a soul beneath the ribs of death was the task to which the great evangelists of the eighteenth century addressed themselves.

That religion had fallen into contempt and morality into desuetude was the open complaint of all those whose judgment is most credible. Bishop Atterbury described libertinism as being a pestilence "that walketh not in darkness, but wasteth at noonday." He said that men and women had "left off even to study the outward appearance of piety and virtue, and were not contented merely *to be*, but affected to be *thought* loose and lawless." Bishop Butler was equally emphatic. "It is taken for

granted," he said, "that Christianity is not so much as a subject of enquiry." And again, "the deplorable distinction of our age is an avowed scorn of religion in some, and a growing disregard of it in the generality." Bishop Secker declared that "the open and professed disregard of religion" "hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness in committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal." The bishops complain bitterly of the general contempt of the clergy, but Dr. John Echard declares frankly that there was only too much ground for it. The clergy were too commonly ignorant of the Scriptures and guilty of "a remiss unthinking course of life." Wesley and Whitefield were to discover that the measure of their ignorance was the measure of their bigotry. The consequences of this contempt and neglect of religion in the low condition of public and private morals were everywhere manifest. The pages of Mr. Lecky abound in almost incredible stories of vice and crime open and rampant in the streets of the big towns and cities. Robbers and murderers abounded. Gangs of drunken ruffians paraded the streets and subjected women to nameless outrages and defenceless men to abominable tortures. The constables shared the drunken habits of the time; and in this condition committed cruelties so monstrous that it is impossible to read them even to-day in cold blood. It seemed as if the whole population were given over to an orgy of drunkenness, which made the very name of Englishman stink in the nostrils of other nations. The consumption of ardent spirits increased appallingly owing to the law which permitted anyone, on payment of a small duty, to start a distillery of his own. Keepers of gin-shops were known to hang

JOHN WESLEY PREACHING.

out signs that a customer might get drunk for a penny, and dead-drunk for twopence, and have straw for nothing. It is little wonder that crimes of violence multiplied on every hand. In the presence of social evils so terrible the half-faith which was all that the Churches could profess was indeed an ineffectual weapon.

John Wesley was born at the rectory of Epworth, Lincolnshire, on the 17th of June, 1703. The blood in his veins was Puritan and Nonconformist. His father had been educated for the Dissenting ministry, but horror at the historical fact of the execution of Charles drove him into the Establishment, and, one may add, made him a somewhat virulent and uncharitable Churchman. John Wesley's grandfather and great-grandfather were ejected from their livings on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662. He himself preserved in his journal an interesting document containing an account of the examination of his grandfather by the Bishop of Bristol. The grandfather defended his ordination by a "gathered church," insisted that he was commissioned by Christ to preach the Gospel, and for proofs of his ministry pointed to the "conversion of many souls." It is impossible to read this statement and not feel that the evangelistic passion of the grandfather reappeared in the grandson. The mother of the Wesleys has often been called the mother of Methodism, and this in a very true sense she was. The daughter of a well-known Nonconformist, she re-entered the Establishment at an early age, but never allowed her individuality to be suppressed by the restraints and conventions of the Church of her adoption. Indeed, she alarmed her husband's abnormal sense of propriety by holding meetings for the parishioners in the vicarage, which a zealous curate denounced as a species of conventicle. As usual, however, Mrs. Wesley carried the day, and the irregularity was connived at.

It has been pointed out again and again that her insistence on method in the regulation of life was the origin of the religious habits which won for the well-known society of Oxford men the title of Methodists. Her organising genius, her indomitable will, her love of simplicity, and her vigorous common-sense were all inherited by the most distinguished of her nineteen children. With his younger brother Charles, Wesley went to Oxford. At this time he had all a High Churchman's prejudices. He had no very definite doctrinal convictions, but an extraordinary sense of the value of living by rule. The little society of which he was the centre and soul was contemptuously described as the Holy Club, and subsequently dubbed the "Methodists." The members were scrupulous in observing the forms of the Church, and by way of practical piety, engaged in regular visitation of the prisoners, the sick, and the poor. At the most, the little society can only have numbered fifteen members, but among them, besides the two Wesleys, were James Hervey, whose "Meditations" has become an English classic, and George Whitefield, who was to become probably the greatest English preacher of any age. Of the Methodists, John Wesley was from the first the leading spirit. His life was rigorous and ascetic. His fasts would have seriously impaired the constitution of a weaker person. He had the mind and temper of a high ecclesiastic. At this time the special object of his admiration was William Law, to whom he frequently repaired for "ghostly counsel," and whose book, "The Serious Call to a Devout Life," he was wont to refer to as the *fons et origo* of the Methodist movement. The life of Wesley had a somewhat close parallel in the following century in the life of Gladstone. The gradual liberalising of the intellect broke down the rigid conservatism of Wesley in matters eccle-

siastical as of Gladstone in matters political. But in either case the process was slow; and one feels that the victory was won against some of the strongest prejudices of human nature. Wesley left Oxford in 1735, and shortly afterwards made a voyage to the Colony of Georgia, where he busied himself in religious work. He was still a narrow and scrupulous Anglican ecclesiastic, with a masterful temper; refusing to baptize infants except by immersion, withholding the Sacrament from Dissenters, and refusing to read the burial service over their graves. After an unhappy experience in Georgia he returned to England as rigid as ever in his ecclesiasticism, but full of perplexities as to his faith. While in this condition he came under the next great influence of his life, that of the Moravians, and more especially of one of their preachers, by name Peter Böhler. The doctrines most prominent in the Moravian teaching were Regeneration, Justification by Faith, and what Wesley called a Full Salvation, or Christian Perfection. He so far broke through his ecclesiastical prejudices as to attend "very unwillingly" a meeting of a Moravian Society in Aldersgate Street. This was on May 24, 1738, and the occasion was so memorable that Wesley's experience must be described in his own words. Someone read, and commented on, Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. "While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The experience was so real and powerful that Wesley adds, "I testified openly to all what I now first felt in my heart." "That humble meeting in Aldersgate Street, says Mr. Lecky, "forms an epoch in English history."

It was characteristic of Wesley that he should start at once for the Continent to see Count Zinzendorf, and acquaint himself thoroughly with the Moravian doctrine and system. He was by no means an admirer of all he saw, and in subsequent years was very free in his criticisms, but he was confirmed in his belief that their foundation doctrines contained the secret of peace and power. When he returned to England the Methodist movement began; that is to say, small groups or societies of believers were organised wherever possible, in connection with the Established churches, of those who were similarly indoctrinated, and filled with evangelistic zeal. The members met regularly for mutual confession and exhortation. As for the leaders of the movement they preached in every episcopal pulpit to which they were admitted; but it is perhaps little to be wondered at that, as their doctrines were a rebuke to the fashionable latitudinarianism, and as their earnestness and zeal were a rebuke to the indifference and worldliness of the time, they soon found the majority of pulpits closed to them. Consequently, in 1739 we find Wesley compelled against all his inclinations to erect a Methodist chapel. This he regards as built for purposes supplementary to the general work of the parish church, and in no sense competitive. Meetings are never to be held while public worship is being observed in the church. All members of the society are expected to take the Sacrament from the parish clergyman. Wesley is still resolute to keep his Methodists within the bounds of the Establishment.

It was at this time that a new feature was added to the movement. In George Whitefield Wesley had found an incomparable ally. The son of a Gloucester innkeeper, Whitefield was some thirteen years younger than Wesley. His period of religious awakening at Oxford

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

had all the accompaniments of violent agitation and emotion with which we are familiar in Puritan biographies. Like Luther, too, he tried all outward forms of religious observance in vain. He lay prostrate on the naked earth for hours, praying and agonising almost from nightfall to dawn. By neglect of his person he sought to mortify his pride. The severity of his fasts endangered his life. Relief came to him at last, and as his faith increased he was filled with joy and zeal. The Bishop of Gloucester ordained him, and when it was reported afterwards that Whitefield had "driven fifteen persons mad by his first sermon," the bishop drily remarked that "he hoped the madness might not be forgotten by the next Sunday." It was evident from the first that Whitefield was a preacher of phenomenal power. When he was no more than twenty-four years of age he created an immense sensation in London, Bristol, and Gloucester; and the agreement of his message with that of Wesley is evident from the fact that he attributes the beginning of the revival in these three cities to a sermon on "The Nature and Necessity of our Regeneration, or New Birth in Christ Jesus."

After a visit to Georgia, where he formed a scheme for building and supporting an orphan house, he returned to England to find that the old opportunities of preaching were now denied to him. Buildings, however, were secured for Methodist purposes, the most famous of which was "the Foundry," in Moorfields, henceforth the headquarters of the movement. Another was in Redcross Street, where Whitefield tells us he was first moved to offer an extempore prayer. In Bristol the spirit of ecclesiastical antagonism prevailed. He was forbidden to preach in the churches, and had to confine himself to speaking to the prisoners in the gaol. The Chancellor, so far from granting his application for

permission to preach, threatened that if he attempted to do so without a licence he would first be suspended and then excommunicated. Hereupon Whitefield took the decisive step of preaching in the open air. It seems strange to us that anyone should have been shocked by a practice that certainly had the best of all precedents. Yet this return to the methods of Christ and His apostles caused deep searching of heart among the Methodists themselves. John Wesley says: "I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way." Charles Wesley was even harder to convince, and the majority of the leaders could only agree to settle the problem by drawing lots. Whitefield, however, had decided the matter on more intelligent grounds, and already the colliers of Kingswood were flocking in thousands and tens of thousands to listen to the great preacher. "The first discovery of their being affected," says Whitefield, "was to see the white gutters made by their tears which plentifully fell down their black cheeks." The message of God's forgiving and renewing grace as declared by Whitefield in such moving and winning tones produced astonishing results among these degraded but unsophisticated hearers. Whitefield did not hesitate to go among them and "dine with some of them." A schoolhouse was erected in response to his appeals, the colliers contributing the bulk of the cost.

The rise of field-preaching revolutionised the Methodist movement, and immeasurably widened its influence. It is doubtful whether Wesley would ever have devised such a plan of obtaining the popular ear, and it is bare truth to say that without it the Evangelical Revival, on the scale we know it, could never have been. It was after the adoption of this new method that Wesley wrote in his diary that he had been all his life "so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order"

that he "should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." Now, he "submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation."

The preachers of the revival were now "unmuzzled." God's pulpits were everywhere open to them. On the village green, at the market-crosses, in churchyards, in open fields, on hill-sides, in market squares, on race-courses, and at the corners of the streets, the evangelists took their stand and preached the Gospel. We read of Whitefield's magnificent voice penetrating to the furthest limits of a gigantic crowd composed of those vile elements that congregated to witness public executions. Standing on the scaffold he argued of judgment to come. Again he obtained from the owner of a puppet-show the privilege of his platform from which to address the giddy frequenters of a village fair. Faultlessly arrayed in gown and bands, he commanded respect and attention by his noble face and glorious voice; and his successes in turning antagonistic audiences might justly rank among the greatest triumphs of oratory. Wesley had but little of Whitefield's rhetorical and dramatic power. But as a preacher to vast audiences he produced an effect that was quite extraordinary. Calm, self-possessed, cogent, searching, his more chaste and measured style seemed equally adapted to the educated and uneducated classes. He wrote his sermons to the last with great care, but preached them extemporaneously. The aspect of his audience frequently decided the theme. If they were careless and frivolous he gave out the awful words, "Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," and seldom failed to change the flippant spirit into one of awe and even of terror. If eager, earnest faces gathered round he would take for text

how Christ stood and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink."

The Revival was attended at the outset by those physical phenomena which are never wholly absent from such movements. They had marked the early preaching of the Quakers, and they reappeared now. Under the fierce excitement of the time various forms of hysteria were developed which subsequently became the subject for the mordant satires of Sidney Smith. Wesley himself, who had a curiously vivid belief in witchcraft, and went so far as to say that to disbelieve it was to discredit the Bible, avowed his conviction that many of these cases were examples of diabolical agency. It must be remembered, however, that these revival services were the scenes of an indescribable tumult of emotions—the awful anguish of conscience-stricken souls and the equally intense rapture of faith in a pardoning Love. Men and women rocked to and fro in agony of contrition and fear, and not seldom fell groaning to the ground overwhelmed with shame and despair. Then the message of peace started new faith and hope in their souls, and their ecstasy of joy was as frantic as the ecstasy of their sorrow had been. Sometimes it is certain the weaker sort of men and women were driven clean out of their senses with alarm, as the present and future condition of the soul was depicted by the unsparing eloquence of the preacher. Often the audiences that had come to scoff listened to Whitefield or Wesley with white faces and uncontrollable sobbings, while hardened hypocrites and callous men of the world cried out "What shall I do to be saved?" Those whose set purpose was to interrupt would begin with "big swelling words," but, "immediately after, the hammer of the Word broke the rocks in pieces."

It was not to be expected that such a movement

would provoke no opposition. That the evangelists were beside themselves, and that their methods were the fruit of fanaticism was the fixed conviction of ninety-nine hundredths of the clergy; while all the baser sort whose manner of life here, and whose destiny hereafter were so energetically described, regarded the preachers with violent hatred. It is the glory of the Evangelical Revival that it broke up the religious indifference of the country, and the mobs at whose hands the Methodist preachers suffered were the proof that vice and crime had begun to realise that they must fight for their existence. Again and again Whitefield was stoned, on two occasions at least he came very near being murdered. In the midlands, at Wednesbury, Wesley owed his life solely to his own calm and courage which restrained the fury of the mob. Many were the vows to take away his life, but though he was often handled brutally, he always escaped, sometimes in a miraculous way. A preacher named Seward was killed at Hay, Brecon, and at Norwich a woman and her child were kicked to death. Bulls, goaded to madness, were driven into the midst of crowds of listeners; packs of hounds were urged against the worshippers; stones, mud, rotten eggs and every other missile were employed to break up the meetings and intimidate the Evangelists. In some parts the authorities employed the Press Gang to seize the leaders of local Methodism, and carry them away to the war. The chief effect of the latter proceedings was to give Methodism a footing in the British army which it has never lost.

The opposition of the enemy was less distressing and damaging than the divisions which began to appear among the leaders themselves. Whitefield was an ardent Calvinist, a friend of Jonathan Edwards, and a believer in the explicit Calvinism of the articles of the Church of England. Wesley was a pronounced Arminian, given

to preaching against "the decrees," and holding that the doctrine of "Christian Perfection" was essential to the revival. It should be said, moreover, that there were differences of temperament between the two men which made perfect agreement impossible. Whitefield was far less of an ecclesiastic than Wesley, heartily rejoicing in the Christian fellowship of good men of every denomination. Wesley's prejudices against Dissenters gave way very slowly. Now and then in his journal, in an outburst of candour, he declares that the only real Dissenters are those who dissent from the life of Christ and conform to habits of vice. But recognition of the faith and service of the Nonconformists was grudging and reluctant. Whitefield declares with unction, "I wish all names among the saints of God were swallowed up in that one of Christian. I long for professors to leave off placing religion in saying 'I am a Churchman,' 'I am a Dissenter.' My language to such is 'are you of Christ? If so, I love you with all my heart.'" Such language would have been unnatural to Wesley, though he justly prided himself upon the simple and sufficient basis of his societies. He declared it to be a principle of Methodism "to think and to let think." "Is a man a believer in Jesus Christ," he said in 1765, "and is his life suitable to his profession? are not only the *main* but the *sole* inquiries I make in order to his admission into our society. If he is a Dissenter he may be a Dissenter still; but if he is a Churchman I advise him to continue so." This Catholicity was rather the triumph of experience in the case of Wesley, than the natural product of his mind. It remains his distinction that to the end of his life he was willing to learn, and that as experience ripened his sympathies widened and deepened. As for his teaching of Christian Perfection, Whitefield seems to be justified in the claim he made that Wesley

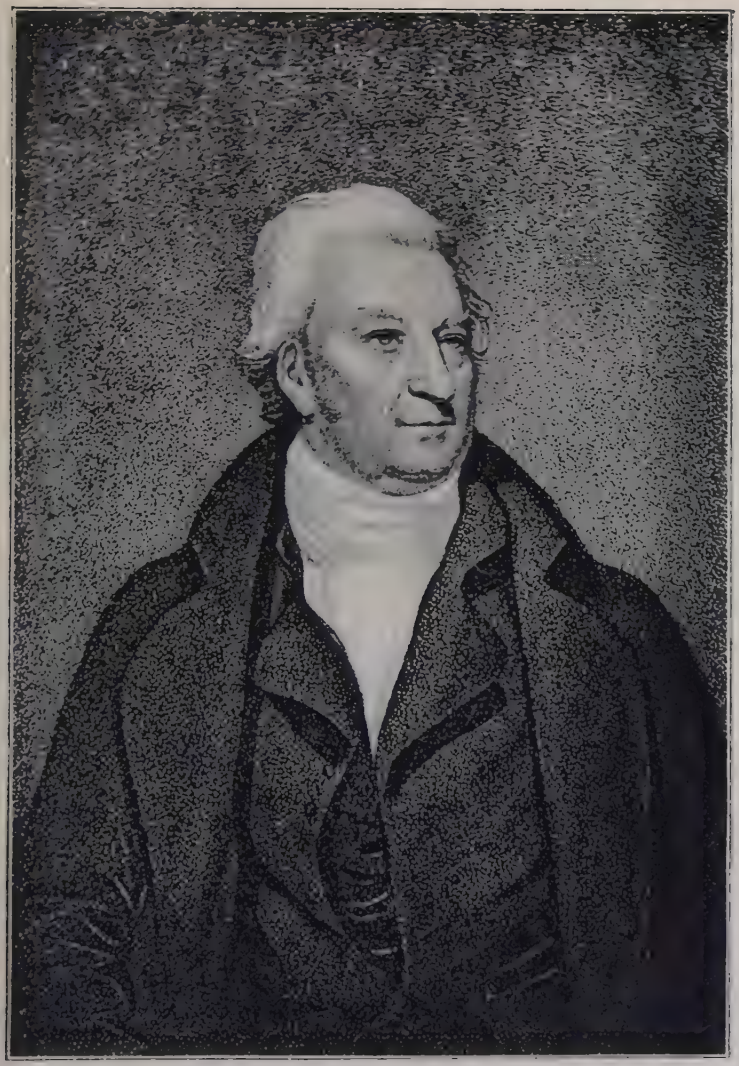
modified his position. In its earlier form it was perilously near that "sinless perfectionism" which Whitefield very naturally and properly regarded with alarm. Later on, Wesley declared that his belief was expressed in the prayer :—

> O grant that nothing in my soul
> May dwell but Thy pure love alone!
> O may Thy love possess me whole,
> My joy, my treasure, and my crown!
> Strange flames far from my heart remove;
> My every act, word, thought, be love.

He was fond of describing it as "a fixed *intention* to give myself up to God." There is nothing in this with which Whitefield would have quarrelled. The superior force of Wesley's intellect may be seen in his unhesitating condemnation of slavery. Whitefield not only sanctioned it, but became himself an owner of slaves, in whose moral and spiritual condition he, nevertheless, interested himself warmly. Wesley preached anti-slavery sermons with noble fearlessness and deserves to be remembered as one of the pioneers of the movement which Wilberforce led to such notable success. Moreover, the independence of Wesley's mind was illustrated in his equal attitude to rich and poor. It may be truly said of him that he never thought the better of any man or woman for being rich or famous or titled. His supreme concern was with the spiritual life, and he judged others as they appeared to him to be rich or poor in faith and piety. The fulsome strain in which Whitefield was wont to write to the Countess of Huntingdon, and which has deservedly exposed him to the scourge of Newman's irony, would never have disfigured the communications of Wesley.

In the controversy which alienated the two men for some years there was no real diminution of affection

and respect on either side. Whitefield's letters breathe love and friendship, and the desire for an "outward" as well as an "inward" union. There had been an understanding between them that neither should preach against the other, a compact which Whitefield, under stress of feeling, broke. It is safe to say, however, that the relations between the two parties —Calvinist and Arminian—might have continued to be amicable but for the virulence of certain subordinate leaders of the revival. Among these three must be mentioned, Augustus Toplady, John Berridge, and Rowland Hill. The two first retained their livings in the Church of England to the end, although they were deeply concerned in the revival movement. Berridge, vicar of Everton, was a man of intense and volcanic nature, whose preaching produced more of the repulsive physical phenomena than followed the evangelism of any other individual. While he deserves all honour for his unfaltering energy of zeal and personal devotion, he had a most rancorous tongue, and his language was hardly less coarse than that of the unregenerate controversialists of the day. His narrow and rancid Calvinism prompted him to single out Wesley as the arch-enemy of the faith, and to "satirise him in doggerel verse as a fox." Toplady has superior claims upon our regard as the author of "Rock of Ages," and other hymns of very noble quality. The amazing thing is that he was forty years junior to Wesley, and yet was restrained by no feelings of reverence from inveighing against the aged evangelist in a succession of pamphlets, each one more virulent than its predecessor. He declared the doubt he had whether "a man that dies an Arminian can go to heaven," and proclaimed Wesley to be "the most rancorous hater of the Gospel system that ever appeared in this land," "a low and puny tadpole in Divinity" governed by "Satanic



ROWLAND HILL.

(From an old Engraving.)

shamelessness and Satanic guilt." Rowland Hill's career deserves ampler commemoration. Sprung from a distinguished family, sixth son of Sir Rowland Hill, of Hawkestone, in Shropshire, he was a man of genuine genius, brimful of native wit and evangelical zeal. The latter declared itself in his college days; and his village preaching, and visitation of prison and workhouse, exposed him to the displeasure of his father and the censure of the University authorities. On leaving Cambridge he was refused ordination by six or seven bishops, who may thus be said to have converted him into an itinerating evangelist. His racy, crisp, homely style, and his unconventional illustrations won for him an instantaneous popularity, which he never lost. He was a man of great natural shrewdness and common sense; and one of his "crazes," as it was esteemed, was an enthusiasm for "inoculation." He not only wrote a treatise entitled "Cowpock Inoculation Vindicated and Recommended from Matters of Fact," but he is said to have personally performed the operation on forty thousand persons. He was eventually ordained to a village living, but in 1782 he began to build the famous Surrey chapel in London, where for fifty years he exercised a ministry of extraordinary power. His eccentricities have received more attention than they deserved; and the great qualities that won for him an enduring influence, and an honoured place among the founders of the London Missionary Society, the Bible Society, and the Tract Society, have sometimes had inadequate recognition The least creditable chapter in his history is his literary invective against Wesley. His description of Wesley's followers as a "ragged legion of preaching barbers, cobblers, tinkers, scavengers, draymen, and chimney-sweepers," is as unpardonable as his abuse of

Wesley himself as "a venal profligate," "a wicked slanderer," "an apostate miscreant." It was subsequently claimed by the Calvinists that the Wesleys and their supporters were guilty of equally flagrant and coarse attacks upon them, and collections of vituperative epithets have been compiled from their writings. But for the most part the self-control and serenity of Wesley stand out in very noble contrast to the scurrility of his opponents. Of his champions Walter Sellon was perhaps the least choice in his language, but the two most notable were Thomas Olivers, and Fletcher of Madeley. Olivers was a cobbler, who has won immortality for himself by his magnificent hymn, "The God of Abraham praise." Fletcher's character is one of the noblest in the annals of Methodism, for, though he was one of the chief sufferers from this acrimonious controversy, he himself passed through it with a serenity and charity that never suffered, leaving behind him polemical writings scarcely a word of which he need have wished unwritten. His proper name was Jean Guillaume de la Flechere, for he was of a Bernese family, "descended from a noble house in Savoy." His dissent from the tenets of Geneva drove him into the army, but after some active service he came to England in time of peace, and by the advice of Wesley took orders in the English Church, entering at the same time into the closest relations with the Arminian leaders of Methodism. In the colliery village of Madeley in Shropshire his work was apostolic. Gradually his spirit of benevolence and his animating faith wore down all opposition. His piety, and his signal abilities so distinguished him that he was asked by the Countess of Huntingdon to accept the honorary presidency of her college at Trevecca. This he did, and fulfilled the duties with exemplary assiduity, until the great Arminian controversy produced such a

cleavage in Methodism that the Calvinistic Countess required him to resign the office.

It is time that we should acquaint ourselves more in detail with the life-story of this famous lady, whose prominence in Methodism was an interesting and remarkable feature, and whose destiny it was to become the founder of a Connexion of Free Churches. Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, was, by the death of her husband the Earl, left a widow in 1746. Two of her sisters-in-law had been influenced by Methodism, and a serious illness resulted in the solemn decision on her own part to devote herself and her means to the promotion of a living faith in the nation at large. Accordingly, when in 1746 she was left sole administrator of a considerable property, she applied herself with a zeal that never wavered to the fulfilment of her vow. When Newman confesses that she is an example "of a person simply and unconditionally giving up this world for the next," and that in so doing "she set Christians of all times an example," he does her no more than justice. It was not easy to take the line she did; yet she never shrank from the full responsibility of her vow. She became an evangelist in fashionable circles. She brought together into her drawing-room men like Lords Chesterfield and Bolingbroke, to listen to the preaching of Whitefield; she attacked such unpromising subjects as the Duchess of Buckingham and the Duchess of Queensberry. The former was highly disgusted at the Methodist assumption that "there is no distinction of persons" before God, and that *all* have sinned and come short of His glory. "It is monstrous," she said, "to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl upon the earth." Chesterfield was polite, and Bolingbroke was as deeply impressed as anyone so destitute of genuine feeling could ever be. The

Countess was sickened by the callousness and worldliness of the age, "an age of which Hoadley was the bishop and Walpole the minister and Pope the poet, and Chesterfield the wit, and Tillotson the ruling doctor." When all, or almost all, in the *beau monde* were satirising Methodism as a form of insanity, the Countess embraced the unpopular opinions, and set herself resolutely to propagate them in her own circle. Limiting her personal expenditure as much as possible, she became the munificent patroness of the new movement, building "tabernacles" for Whitefield and the preachers who were doctrinally in agreement with him, and founding at Trevecca, in South Wales, a seminary for the education of ministers. The Countess was a strict disciplinarian, and exceedingly particular as to the personal appearance of the students. She provided them with clothing as well as food and lodging. Their very handkerchiefs were marked "Trevecca College," "so minutely," says one eulogist, "did the Countess condescend to the details of personal convenience." Gown, cassock, and bands were indispensables; horses were kept for their itinerating journeys, and a small sum of money was entrusted to each for the expenses of travel. She would have been less than mortal if she had not been flattered by the eulogies of her admirers into the belief that she was elect of God to establish the true faith in England, but how far she foresaw that the effect of her policy must be to add another to the existing Nonconformist bodies it is not easy to say. When some who had heartily co-operated with her, like Sir Harry Trelawney, identified themselves with Congregationalism, and when ministers trained at her college, like John Clayton, did likewise, it was natural that she should feel their loss as a desertion; but she seems to have been equally inconsolable when her students lapsed to the Established

SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

Church. She described the Connexion that bore her name as "that sect appointed by God for many increasing blessings to the Church." She was convinced that outside her Connexion there was nothing but the dry bones of religion. She thought of labourers in the Establishment as "miserable prisoners at best," and labourers out of it as "shut up in dry, dead Presbyterian meeting-houses." She wished well to all, for her charity was undoubted, but she had no expectation of the prosperity of any who did not attach themselves to her Connexion. Wesley's temper of mind did not incline him at any time to take that exaggerated view of her importance to Methodism which Whitefield and others held and expressed; and when the Arminian controversy came to a head, the Countess resolved to purge the Connexion of the heretical leaven. Wesley published, in 1771, some very admirable, but decided "Minutes" repudiating the fatalistic tendencies of Calvinism, and the disparagement of "good works" which, as he thought, was common. It is noteworthy that Wesley did not take so strong a step as this until after Whitefield's death, which took place in America in 1769. His funeral sermon was preached by Wesley in London, and the latter afterwards expressed the hope that a blow had been given to the bigotry which had so long prevailed. The removal from the scene of Whitefield's great personality meant the withdrawal of an influence that was consistently cast on the side of harmony and peace. Accordingly, on the publication of Wesley's minutes, the storm broke. The Countess required all her students and professors to abjure the obnoxious doctrine. Fletcher promptly resigned his position at the head of Trevecca College. He had not quarrelled with Geneva in his own land to become its bond-servant in another. At a conference held subsequently in

Bristol a resolution of accommodation was arrived at, but the violence of the party theologians upset all dispositions towards peace, and resulted in the final breach between the Calvinist and Arminian Methodists. It may be said at once that the former are chiefly represented to-day in the Calvinistic Methodist Churches of Wales and in a few churches left in England belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. But an even more powerful result of the split was in the strengthening of those Nonconformist Churches already in existence, notably the Independents, whose Calvinism had always been above suspicion and who profited largely by the new spirit of earnestness and evangelic zeal; and also in the consolidation of the Evangelical school in the Church of England, whose members were to be so nobly identified with the anti-slavery crusade, with the formation of the great unsectarian Evangelical societies, and subsequently through Lord Shaftesbury and others with agitations for the improvement of the social condition of the people.

Meanwhile John Wesley went upon his way exhorting, organising, edifying, sometimes reconstructing his societies throughout the length and breadth of the land. Step by step he had been driven to acquiesce in methods of service and worship that were only possible under the conditions of Nonconformist freedom. He had approved field-preaching; he had sanctioned the building of separate meeting-houses (though he did not like the word); he had consented to the recognition of local preachers, most of whom were "licensed" as Protestant Dissenters, and had discovered that his mother was not the only woman who had the gift of tongues; he had himself ordained ministers to go to America and to Ireland; he had lived to see the Sacrament administered in buildings not episcopally conse-

crated, for many clergymen refused it to Methodist preachers; he had called into existence new orders of Church officers, stewards and class-leaders, with definite duties and powers, but wholly unrecognised by the Established Church; he had partially organised an annual Conference, the members of which had authority over the itinerating preachers. In all this, consciously or unconsciously, he had been building up a new ecclesiastical structure; and he was far too shrewd an observer not to see that it had only been possible under Free Church privilege. John Wesley lived and died in communion with the Church of England, but he lived and died a Free Churchman. No Nonconformist of his time was so daring in innovations on the established and recognised order. It may be true, as has been urged, that the Church of Rome would have retained Wesley and his followers, even as she found room in her borders for Franciscans and Benedictines and Jesuits. But the Church of England has been ever inelastic; so that even those who have had, as Wesley had, an exaggerated reverence for her ritual and polity, have been compelled if they would realise their own spiritual ideals to do so outside her rigid organisation and to find refuge in Nonconformity from her intolerance of unconventionality.

It is impossible to read John Wesley's Journals without feeling that if he was not in the apostolical succession no man ever was. He adopted field-preaching in 1739, and for more than fifty years he rode up and down England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, preaching morning, afternoon, and evening, wherever an audience could be collected in churches, chapels, streets, fields, shops, barns, or private houses. During the early years his persecutions and perils were not insignificant; but in his later years he was more concerned with opposition from

invisible principalities and powers. Although he called himself "*homo unius libri* (comparatively)" his Journal bears ample evidence of his intellectual interests. He reads Voltaire and Rousseau, he comments on the poetry and books of travel of the day. He flavours his pages frequently with apposite classical quotations. He takes note of natural beauties, describes rare plants, criticises Raphael cartoons, discourses on historical associations and events. Yet through all the varied music, one dominant theme strikes. He has one thing which he does; one end for which he lives and labours. His apostolic ambition is to bring men and women to God. Not that he is indifferent to their bodily welfare. If any man think so, let him read the following:—"On this and the four following days I walked through the town and begged two hundred pounds in order to clothe them that needed it most. But it was hard work, as most of the streets were filled with melting snow, which often lay ankle-deep; so that my feet were steeped in snow-water nearly from morning till evening." Who is this reckless young enthusiast, defying rheumatism, and bronchitis, and a score of other ills? It is grand old John Wesley, aged eighty-two, tramping the streets of London, through snow-slush in January, to beg warm raiment for the poor. Ten days before, he had preached to forty-seven criminals under sentence of death in Newgate—"There was something very awful in the clink of their chains"—and in less than a fortnight later, though he had supposed his "journeys this winter had been over," he "could not decline one more," and is off to Colchester and other parts. He attributes his magnificent health and vigour to several reasons, not least to preaching regularly early in the morning. His passion for preaching seemed only to deepen when in his last years faculties began to decay. It is on October

18th, 1790, that at the age of eighty-seven he is driving to Lynn in Norfolk. "The wind with drizzling rain came full in our faces, and we had nothing to screen us from it, so that I was thoroughly chilled from head to foot before I came to Lynn. *But I soon forgot this little inconvenience ;* for which the earnestness of the congregation made me large amends." Eight days later he is back in London.

"Sunday, October 24th, 1790. I explained to a numerous congregation in Spitalfields Church 'the whole armour of God.' St. Paul's, Shadwell, was still more crowded in the afternoon, while I enforced that important truth 'One thing is needful' ; and I hope many, even then, resolved to choose the better part." With these words John Wesley's Journal ends. He had spent a long lifetime preaching the "one thing needful." On February 1st, 1791, he wrote his last letter to America insisting that the Methodist people were one all the world over. If they had anything to say to him let it be soon, "for time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind." He preached on till within a fortnight of his death, which occurred on March 2nd. "I particularly desire that there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom." Six poor men carried his coffin to the vault in the City-road Chapel. Above his grave the words are recorded that "he lived to see, in these kingdoms only, about three hundred itinerant and a thousand local preachers, raised up from the midst of his own people ; and eighty thousand persons in the societies under his care." So lived and died John Wesley, who "arose by the singular Providence of God to enlighten these nations" and to found a Christian organisation which, since his death, has covered the face of the earth with

Methodist societies. As Mr. Birrell has so well written, "No man lived nearer the centre than John Wesley, neither Clive nor Pitt, neither Mansfield nor Johnson. You cannot out him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts, no other man did such a life's work for England."

In his "History of Civilisation in England" Mr. Buckle calls Wesley the "first of theological statesmen." Methodism as a system was a singularly accurate representation of the mind and spirit of its founder. John Wesley was a great ecclesiastic who, by long experience of the power of religion among poor and simple people, as well as of the narrow intolerance of organised and established sacerdotalism, had become increasingly strengthened in democratic sympathies. The ecclesiastical bent of his mind was manifest in the arrangement by which the supreme power in Methodism was vested in the "Legal Hundred," a purely clerical body. His democratic sympathies found representation in the system of class-meetings where spiritual guidance and help was given very commonly by laymen, as well as by the authorisation of lay-preaching, the appointment of circuit stewards, and so forth. It might have been prophesied without difficulty that in course of time the democratic element would come into conflict with the clerical. Wesley's influence had checked certain inevitable developments of Methodism as an independent ecclesiastical organisation. It was still regarded by many as supplementary to the Established Church. The rules that no meetings should be held during the hours of worship at the parish church, and that members of Methodist societies should attend the parish churches to receive the Sacrament, were bound to disappear as Methodism grew conscious of its mission and oppor-

of the Rev.d Mr Whitfield's NEW CHAPEL and ALMS-HOUSES
in Tottenham Court Road. MIDDLESEX. 1756
On the EXCELLENCY
This VOLUME of my Father's Grace
Does all my Griefs asswage
Here I behold my SAVIOUR'S Face
Almost in ev'ry Page
of the HOLY SCRIPTURES
THIS is the Field where hidden lies
The PEARL of Price unknown
That Merchant is Divinely Wise
Who makes this PEARL his own

WHITEFIELD'S TABERNACLE, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON.

(*From an old Engraving.*)

tunity, and confident as to its permanent place in the order of Christendom. The early battles in Methodism were between those who represented Wesley the ecclesiastic, and those who represented Wesley the democrat. Wesley had given the popular and progressive spirit so secure a place in the Methodist system that it was certain before long to challenge the absolute supremacy of a select clerical body. Before the eighteenth century was out the first protest had been made, and the first organisation of sectional Methodism had been begun.

It is a curious fact that the leader in this movement was born at the same little Lincolnshire village where John Wesley first saw the light. Alexander Kilham was the son of Methodist parents living at Epworth, and it was during a revival service at Epworth that in his eighteenth year he became a convinced Christian and an energetic and useful worker in connection with the Methodist society. In due course he was accepted by Mr. Wesley as a preacher, and distinguished himself by zealous and successful labours in several circuits. Shortly after Wesley's death he was stationed at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where his superintendent had incurred some criticism for giving the Lord's Supper to members of the society instead of insisting on their going to the parish church. Kilham published a tract on the subject, and was promptly censured by Conference. He appears to have been confirmed in his conviction that Methodism needed a stronger lay element in its government by what he saw of Scotch Presbyterianism during circuit work at Aberdeen; and on returning to the North of England he liberated his soul in a pamphlet called "The Progress of Liberty," in which he boldly asserted the rights of the people in the Church. For this he was first cited before the district meeting, and subsequently impeached before Conference. It is not too much to

say that the action of the latter body confirmed the criticisms which Mr. Kilham had directed against clerically-constituted authorities. The arbitrariness and intolerance of differences which seem invariably to distinguish assemblies of ecclesiastics were abundantly manifested in the treatment of Mr. Kilham. It was unanimously resolved that he be expelled. This was in July, 1796.

In the spring of the year following an old Baptist meeting-house, Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, was bought by a few sympathisers, and here Mr. Kilham was established as a preacher. Those associated with him declared their attachment to "the cause of Methodism," adding this admirable affirmation, "But they are firmly persuaded that religious liberty is the birthright of every Englishman, and that they, as members of the Methodist society, have a right to all the privileges which the Gospel offers." In point of fact, the whole dispute was concerned with the interpretation of these "privileges." By a coincidence it was at Leeds that Conference was to meet in the following July, and a series of persistent efforts was made to secure some recognition of the rights of the laity in Methodism. A resolution was proposed and rejected that there should be a measure of lay representation in Conference; a resolution was proposed and rejected that there should be lay representation in the district meetings; a resolution was proposed and rejected that a representative "house of laymen" should meet at the same time and place as Conference, and should be allowed a voice in all *new* rules and regulations. Conference had stiffened its back, and the progressives were repulsed at every point. The consequence was that in the month following—August, 1797—a small group of sixteen or seventeen persons met in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, and constituted

the first Conference of the Methodist New Connexion, which was originally known as the New Itinerancy. Mr. Kilham became secretary, the Rev. W. Thorn being the first President. The former was not to be spared long to see the growth of the Connexion of which he was the founder. Before the end of 1798 he passed away, at the early age of thirty-six.

In the New Connexion Conference ministers and laymen are present in equal numbers; and in the subordinate Connexional "courts" the same rule prevails, a minister being entitled by his office to preside if one is present. Later developments of Methodism have outdone the New Connexion in the democratic character of their constitution; but the credit of being the first Methodist body to organise itself on distinctively democratic lines belongs to the New Connexion. Its history, while not a brilliant one, has been useful and honourable; and its progress sure if slow. It passed through one period of severe trial when the Rev. William Barker, its most eloquent preacher at the time, adopted anti-sacramentarian views and theological opinions that were esteemed radically unsound. Barker's subsequent career seemed to demonstrate that the Conference was right in regarding him as dangerously latitudinarian. But for a time he wrought havoc in the denomination, carrying with him after his expulsion something like one quarter of the whole body, and involving the Connexion in harassing disputes and suits as to property. It was some few years before the Connexion resumed its normal life of quiet progress. At the present time it can point with honourable pride to some thirty-five thousand members and eighty-five thousand Sunday scholars, while it is also entitled to claim that Methodism in other parts of the world has organised itself on lines that do not

materially differ from those of the New Connexion. The development of lay representation within Wesleyan Methodism has been a genuine if tardy tribute to the soundness of the New Connexion protest. It is by no means improbable that the democratic movement within the parent denomination may open the door to reunion at no distant future.

An even more influential and picturesque movement was the rise of what came to be known as Primitive Methodism, a movement that represents probably the noblest influence of to-day on the life of rural England. Among the village labourers, and among the colliers of the mining districts, the humble but devoted evangelists who found themselves thoroughly at home in the frankly democratic system of Primitive Methodism did the most striking religious work that the early years of the nineteenth century witnessed.

The separation of the founders of Primitive Methodism from the older system was due not to any agitation for lay representation but to certain acts of intolerance that were curiously disloyal to the history and traditions of Methodism. The passion for winning men and women to Christ which drove the Wesleys and Whitefield out into the highways and hedges inspired two humble laymen, Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, to organise great open-air preaching services and prayer meetings modelled on what the American Methodists called camp meetings. That the inheritors of John Wesley's name and spirit should have condemned in the nineteenth century what he practised in the eighteenth is a singular illustration how readily the fear of innovation may paralyse the spirit of progress. The early camp-meetings were held on a high ridge of land called Mow Cop, which divides Staffordshire from Cheshire. Others were held on the Wrekin in Shropshire, and as the ex-

periment was proved to be fruitful, many great open spaces were requisitioned. A campaign so novel, organised by non-commissioned officers, and sustained by irregular forces, alarmed the timid authorities at headquarters. The possible perils of the movement outweighed with them the actual and assured successes; and a formal censure was promulgated. The consequence of this action by the Conference was the expulsion of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes from the Methodist societies to which they belonged. They were not prepared to abandon the new method of reaching the masses; and hence were driven to organise the results of their work independently of the old Methodist societies. The first camp-meeting had been held on May 31st, 1807; in July of that year Conference pronounced against the movement; in June of the following year Mr. Hugh Bourne was expelled from the old Methodist society; two years later Mr. William Clowes was expelled for the same reason. The disposition to make it impossible for any who took active part in the camp-meetings to remain in association with the old Methodism led to many regrettable acts of intolerance, and there sprang into existence in consequence the connexion of Methodist societies known as Primitive Methodism, the first general meeting of which was held at Tunstall in July, 1811.

It may be said at once that if the New Connexion Methodists had led the way in a more liberal polity, Primitive Methodism was even more democratic. The organisation is devised so that alike at Conference and at the District Meetings the proportion of laymen to travelling preachers shall be two to one. In other respects all the outstanding features of Methodism are loyally preserved. The history of the spread of Primitive Methodism in England is a remark-

able and notable one. It owed none of its success to any commanding personality such as Wesley or Whitefield. It had many evangelists possessing a rough forceful eloquence, and a passion of conviction; but with very few exceptions their reputation and influence were confined to the circuits where their work was done. The edifice of Primitive Methodism was built up by the fidelity and industry and self-sacrifice of an immense number of humble day-labourers. This, perhaps, has a prosaic sound. But to few religious movements does more of the romance of missions belong. The zeal of these evangelists roused an opposition similar to that from which the first Methodist preachers suffered. In all parts of the kingdom the Primitive Methodist "locals" were abominably treated. They were pelted with stones, rotten eggs, and all kinds of filth. They were assailed with oaths and curses. Some of them were half-murdered by mobs of drunken blackguards. The more one reads the story of those early days the more one is impressed by the intrepidity and simple heroism of the plain, honest, earnest men who perilled their lives day after day, and encountered the vilest opprobrium, to make the neglected parts of England sober and righteous and religious. Clergymen rang the bells of the churches furiously to drown the preaching, or used the fire-engine against the preachers. Magistrates arrested them, and in defiance of all law flung them into prison. A peculiarly flagrant instance of this occurred as late as 1830, when Thomas Russell, a Primitive Methodist preacher, was arrested at Chaddleworth and sentenced to three months' hard labour. One month's imprisonment and labour as an ordinary felon at the treadmill he did endure. Then his case was taken up by that admirable defender of religious liberty, John Wilks, and he was released. He refused to take pro-

ceedings against the magistrates who had inflicted upon him this infamous sentence, but his sufferings largely contributed to secure immunity for his brethren.

The Primitive Methodist itinerancy, it must be remembered, was pursued by poor men, and almost entirely *on foot*. When John Petty was told at Tunstall that he had been appointed to work at Haverfordwest, he shouldered his bundle of clothes and took to the road, footing it nearly every mile of the way, and preaching here and there as he went. William Garner estimated from his diary that in twenty-one years he travelled *on foot* nearly *forty-five thousand miles*, and preached over six thousand sermons. It is on record that on one occasion William Clowes walked thirty-five miles in the day and preached five sermons, and that no food passed his lips. The activity of these apostolic evangelists does not move our admiration more than their poverty appeals to our sympathy. William Clowes was appointed a preacher at ten shillings a week, a sum raised later on to fifteen shillings. "We used coarse food," he writes simply, "dining when by ourselves on a little suet and potatoes, or a piece of bread and a drink of water." But no hardships could daunt his enthusiasm; and if God gave him souls for his hire he did not envy any man his riches. It was a trifling sacrifice to such a man that he should have to sell a comfortable bed to pay his way, and sleep henceforth on a coarser one. He knew indeed what it was to have the grass for couch and the stars for coverlet. But in all the chronicles of William Clowes and his contemporaries you may search in vain for any murmur or complaint. They sang their way along, suffering contempt without resentment, and violence without retaliation. In the days of the fox-hunting parson they were almost alone in caring for the souls of the villagers, or indeed in crediting them

with souls to care for. Their reward was very commonly abuse and indignity and imprisonment. But if faith and love are the sovereign realities, they were men of high rank and noble worth. These plain, blunt, homely, self-educated evangelists of Primitive Methodism belong to the saints and heroes of England.

Another very striking and attractive religious movement, destined to have a quite extraordinary influence in the South-West of England, originated among a few humble people in Devonshire about the time when Napoleon was making his last stand, and the destiny of Europe was in the balances. We have repeatedly seen that the spiritual life first awakened by earnest preaching from Church of England pulpits has tended to organise itself outside that Communion. Such facts go to prove that freedom is necessary for the realisation of the religious life. When the Rev. Daniel Evans, a young curate touched with the passion of the Evangelical Revival, began to preach in the old parish church at Shebbear in Devonshire, he had certainly no desire to add force to the Free Church movement in that part of the land. Yet he was the instrument of creating an evangelistic fervour in the hearts of certain of his hearers which required for its satisfaction methods of worship and service which the State Church could not supply and would not sanction. The two persons most deeply influenced by his preaching were John and Mary Thorne, of Lake Farm, both staunch and even narrow Church people. The wife passed through a period of severe self-condemnation and even despair, but the light of the Gospel broke upon her, and at the close of a service in Shebbear parish church, she rose and delivered a very simple witness to the joy that had come into her life. This startling innovation, instead of being welcome as a tribute to the power of the service,

was regarded by most of the congregation as a disorderly and unpardonable act; and even Mary Thorne's friends and connections were disposed to resent the proceeding.

At this time there was a travelling preacher in Cornwall and Devon, whose house-to-house evangelism had awakened much interest, but whose irregular ministry had not been viewed with any favour by the older conservative Methodists. This was William O'Bryan, a native of Luxillian, in Cornwall, where he was born in 1778. He is one of those on whose head John Wesley the aged is said to have laid his hands with the prayer, "May he be a blessing to hundreds and thousands." Such prayers tend to fulfil themselves by forming ideals. O'Bryan pursued his vocation in homely fashion, pleading with individuals in the fields and lanes, and addressing families and small groups of listeners in cottage homes. There was singular reluctance among the Methodist authorities to concede him any recognised place in their system as a preacher, and he pursued his own irregular method, perambulating the countryside with results from which the Methodist societies largely profited. As he formed new societies the difficulty of his position increased, and when in November, 1810, "he was formally excluded from the Methodist Society in the chapel of which he had given the freehold besides about half the cost of the building," the situation had become intolerable. Yet a new organisation was far from his thoughts, and he seems to have acted steadily in the interests of peace, seeking out neglected parishes and avoiding conflict with the Methodist authorities. After a while he was invited to reunite with his old society, and he did so; but the antagonism to his irregularities of service revived, and on a frivolous pretext he was again excluded from membership. There seems to have been no shadow of reason except that he

took too much upon himself in seeking to save the lost in his own way, and wherever he might find them. His constancy to this mission never faltered; and when he was urged by two sons of John and Mary Thorne to visit Lake Farm and preach to them and their neighbours, he did so. On the 9th of October, 1815, he spoke to a company of people who filled the kitchen and parlour of the farmhouse, and at the close was urged to form a society. Mr. and Mrs. Thorne, their five children, and fifteen other persons gave in their names, and the parent society of the Bible Christian denomination was formed. William O'Bryan is commonly regarded as the founder; but James Thorne, who began that night an active membership extending over half a century, was the noblest and most powerful personality brought to the service of the new movement.

One conspicuous feature of the campaign thus originated was entirely unpremeditated, and accepted with some reluctance by the leaders, and only when it appeared to them to have the hand of God in it. When we recall the personal testimony of Mary Thorne in Shebbear Church, we cannot wonder that in a denomination of which she was the "mother," women should claim their place as evangelists. But it could hardly have been foreseen how great a place that was to be. The most adventurous and intrepid missionaries of the good cause were women. To the Scilly Isles, to the Channel Islands, to the Isle of Wight, to London, and even to far Northumberland, women evangelists carried the message, and were singularly successful in most instances in securing a foothold for the Connexion. Some of their experiences were romantic and thrilling. They were almost penniless, throwing themselves upon the generosity of the people; they endured fatigues and faced perils from which men might have shrunk. No hard-

ships of the journey daunted them if the choice lay between obedience and disobedience to the heavenly vision. Through weakness, sickness, and exhaustion they persevered, often with a courage at which we, in our unheroic days, can only marvel, and with a devotion that puts our modern lukewarmness to shame. Perhaps their truest successors have been found among the most consecrated of the "lasses" of the Salvation Army.

The habit of these simple West-country Methodists of carrying their Bibles under their arms won for them the nickname, which subsequently became the recognised denominational title, Bible Christians. The first chapel was built with much propriety at Shebbear by the Thorne family. It was the beginning of a remarkable enterprise. From that day in August, 1817, a month has not elapsed without a Bible Christian chapel having been added to the total. Most of them are, of course, small, built to meet the needs of villages and hamlets; but not one among them but represents the love and sacrifice of poor and humble folk, and not one among them but has been a centre of life and light to the Christian society for which it was built. A very wide circulation was secured from the first for the narrative of the evangelistic labours of "Billy" Bray, a rough but genuine genius whose quaint wit and ways endeared him to thousands, and whose singular success in erecting places of worship was only exceeded by his higher success in attaching to them men and women of reformed character and consecrated spirit. For a time, indeed, it seemed as if the Bible Christian denomination were doomed to disintegration. The day of trial came upon it when its founder, William O'Bryan, claimed an autocratic authority entirely inconsistent with the democratic sources of the movement. Mr. O'Bryan did not carry with him the leaders of the denomination; and

especially James Thorne was nobly true to the side of popular privilege. Eventually Mr. O'Bryan disappeared from the scenes of his early labours, and devoted himself to a minstry in America. After a few years the original harmony was fully restored, and the denomination was all the stronger for this timely affirmation of the democratic basis of the Church.

From the year 1827 to the middle of the century Wesleyan Methodism was subject to a series of convulsions, the consequence of the conflict between the democratic and the clerical parties to which we have referred. During this period the man at the helm was an ecclesiastical statesman of a very high order, but belonging by all his prejudices to the extreme conservative wing in Methodism. This was the Rev. Dr. Jabez Bunting. Those who sympathise least with Dr. Bunting's policy, and who feel that with more of the *suaviter in modo* in the governing body the divisions in Methodism need never have happened, are yet free to acknowledge Dr. Bunting's great services to the denomination. His zeal for education, his consistent endeavour to maintain and advance the standard of ministerial efficiency, his philanthropy, his enlightened support of Foreign Missions—all entitle him to the regard of posterity as they won for him great influence over his contemporaries. But the sayings that were remembered against him, such as "Methodism knows nothing of democracy; Methodism hates democracy as it hates sin," argue a fatal insensibility to the significance of the greatest movement of his time alike in State and Church. The influence of the democratic spirit as evidenced in the agitation for Reform was bound to affect Methodism; so that any suspicion of an autocratic and illiberal policy was keenly resented. In 1827 the celebrated Leeds organ case precipitated a separation. The real

question at stake was as to the rights of the "district meeting." By a law of Conference, if such an innovation on the recognised usage as the erection of an organ were to be permitted, the proposal must have the sanction of the "district meeting." In this case an overwhelming majority of the district meeting decided against such an addition to Brunswick Chapel, Leeds. Then Conference took a high hand, and after the merest show of constitutional proceeding, appointed a superintendent to Leeds pledged to carry out the organ scheme in spite of all opposition. Clearly, if this were legitimate, the rights and privileges of the "district meeting" were insubstantial. A thousand members seceded from the Leeds circuit, and formed a separate body known as Protestant Methodists, which soon numbered several thousands of adherents.

That the opposition to organs was unenlightened must be admitted; at the same time constitutional freedom was of far greater importance than any question as to the propriety of this or that musical instrument. In regard to the second problem which agitated Methodism, it is equally true that Conference was right on the narrower issue, and wrong, or at least unwise, on the larger constitutional issue. The desire of Conference to establish a theological institution for the training of junior ministers showed insight into the needs of the times, and was in keeping with the best traditions of Nonconformity. Various colleges and academies had been founded by the older Nonconformist Churches, and some of these at least had achieved high reputation. If Methodism was to keep abreast of the age, a theological training-school was indispensable, and such exclamations as those of the Rev. James Everett, "All is dark; Methodism is ruined," seem to us to-day ludicrously inept. It must be remembered at the same time

that on so important a new departure the Connexion as a whole was entitled to be heard, and when Mr. Everett stood for the right of the people everywhere to a voice in this matter, he was on far firmer ground. The dissentients insisted with justice that by what were known as the Leeds concessions, Conference had bound itself to consult "the sentiments of the Connexion at large through the medium of all their public officers" whenever any new and drastic change was in prospect. At every turn of the controversy it was the constitutional problem that emerged. The rights of the Methodist people were pleaded against the arbitrary rule of a clerical body. Circuits such as the Rochdale one had begun to advocate as the sole remedy "the admission of the people to a share in the government of the Church." The reply of Conference was by the argument of excommunication. To get rid of this agitation against clerical control it decided to expel the agitators. Numbers of ministers and members were dealt with summarily. The Wesleyan Association of 1835 was the result, and in 1836 they united organically with the Protestant Methodists and with a small body known as the Arminian Methodists.

If Conference could only have learned even by this experience that the true remedy for agitation is not repression but reform, the Connexion might have been spared the most disastrous event in its history. When a great body is in the hands of an oligarchy; when decisions vital to its welfare are arrived at with closed doors, and when its local authorities are excluded from real influence, all sorts of suspicions as to maladministration are sure to be created. Dr. Bunting's high character should have saved him from the injurious aspersions to which his policy exposed him. The remedy was in more openness and confidence on the part of Conference, but

of this there was no sign. After the high-handed procedure in expelling the would-be reformers of 1835, it was little to be wondered at that new attacks on the clerical system were made under the veil of anonymity. "Fly-sheets," as they were called, were printed and circulated, boldly and not always too scrupulously questioning the management of affairs in the Connexion. Certain denominational papers, whose editors were known, were engaged in the advocacy of moderate reforms. The official "ring" took these criticisms ill. In 1849 James Everett was interrogated as to his share in the "fly-sheets." He refused to answer, holding that Conference was being turned into an Inquisition. Samuel Dunn, editor of the *Wesley Banner*, took the same line; as also did William Griffith, who had had association with the *Wesleyan Times*. These three ministers were promptly expelled. It is probable that Conference had little foreseen the consequence. Through years of agitation opinion had been ripening in the country against the clerical absolutism in Methodism, and the expulsion of the three ministers set the tinder on fire. Something like a hundred thousand adherents were lost to the mother body. Great public meetings were held in all parts of the land to protest against the action of the Conference. In the older Nonconformist bodies, sympathy with the expelled ministers was everywhere manifest. The Wesleyan Reformers, as they were called, included many of the most influential Methodist families in the country. Societies seceded bodily; whole circuits practically identified themselves with the cause of Reform. Cast out of their chapels, the people met in barns, tents, halls, and any building that could be temporarily converted to their use. Negotiations were opened up with a view to a great amalgamation of the more democratic Methodist bodies; and after

prolonged conferences, the Wesleyan Association and the Wesleyan Reformers came together into one strong, progressive organisation to be known henceforth as the United Methodist Free Churches. The annual assembly of this body consists of representatives appointed by the Circuit Quarterly Meetings, which meetings are composed of representatives of the various churches and Sunday-schools in the circuit, together with the Connexional ministers and local preachers. It is thus a thoroughly democratic body, on which if a minister serves he serves as a representative. The right of each circuit to invite its "itinerating preachers" is jealously conserved, subject only to a final "adjustment" on the part of the General Assembly. The denomination thus founded has enjoyed much prosperity, and has exercised wide influence for good. Its foreign missionary work, equally with its home missionary work, has been eminently successful. Moreover, in estimating the gain that has resulted from these successive protests within Methodism on behalf of the rights of the Christian laity, we must not forget that Wesleyan Methodism has acknowledged the justice of the plea by admitting lay representation to Conference, for dealing with all questions of finance, a just if late recognition of the fact that the Church of Christ is not a clerical body, but an association of faithful men and women—a principle fundamental to the life of the Free Churches.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Awakening of Wales.

Contemporaneously with the Methodist movement in England there was a mighty religious awakening in Wales, the fruit of which may be seen in the overwhelming Nonconformity of the Principality to-day. As in England, so in Wales, the leading spirits were devout and loyal Churchmen, who had no desire to separate from the Established Church; but as in England, so in Wales, the revived spiritual life broke like a flood the narrow ecclesiastical boundaries of the Establishment, and fulfilled itself under conditions of freedom. Up to the time of the revival Nonconformity had only a small and precarious footing in North Wales, though it was more substantially represented in the South. We know how deep and sincere John Penry's lamentations had been over the spiritual destitution of his countrymen, and we have followed the militant and long-suffering Vavasour Powell in his evangelism with its dark interludes of imprisonment. The Mecca of Nonconformity in Wales is the village of Llanvaches, near Chepstow, in the beautiful Wye Valley. It was to this village that in November, 1639, the Rev. Henry Jessey, of Southwark, with whose name we are familiar, travelled down from London, his errand being to assist in the regular organisation of the first Independent church in Wales. He found awaiting him two ministers, one

far advanced in years and one in the first vigour of youth, who deserve to be associated as the pioneers of Welsh Nonconformity. The veteran preacher was William Wroth, the young one was his disciple, Walter Cradock.

Wroth was a graduate of Christchurch, Oxford, who, probably as early as the end of the sixteenth century, was presented to the living of Llanvaches. The story is that he was roughly shaken out of his early levity by the tragic death of a friend, and under the solemn impression of this event applied himself in an entirely new spirit to his sacred calling. Such a ministry as William Wroth now began to exercise was as a light in a dark land. It was much talked of through the countryside, and men and women in whose hearts was any hunger for a higher life flocked to Llanvaches. William Wroth was conspicuously a saint, and his influence over the younger generation was profound. Llanvaches became a place of pilgrimage, and whenever its rector visited other parts, which he frequently did, he was sought after and listened to with extraordinary eagerness. This was the sort of man for whom Archbishop Laud and the idolaters of uniformity had no tolerance; and on the advancement of that prelate to the primacy, Wroth was summoned before the High Commission, and in 1638 deprived of his living. He was now well on towards seventy years of age, but he was not disposed to accept the intimation of Laud that his work was done. The Archbishop had made him a Nonconformist, and in so doing had set him free to become the founder of a movement which ultimately was to change the whole face of Wales and destroy the power of that Establishment to which Laud rendered such grave disservice. In the year following his deprivation, as we have seen, William Wroth persuaded

Henry Jessey to visit Llanvaches, and an Independent church was organised there. Three years later he passed away.

At the time of the founding of Llanvaches Independent Church, Walter Cradock was a young man some thirty years of age. He appears to have been educated at Oxford, was possessed of independent property, and from living in the near neighbourhood of Llanvaches, was deeply impressed with William Wroth's ministry. He himself was ejected from a church in Cardiff for refusing to read "the Book of Sports"; his relatives scorned him for his Nonconformity, and he left the neighbourhood of his early life, and obtained a curacy at Wrexham in North Wales. In twelve months' time he was driven out of this position; but so striking had been his preaching and so devoted his labours during that brief period that we are told "he made a lasting impression on the town and the country around, and laid the foundation of the Nonconformist interest in that part of the Principality." After many vicissitudes he became assistant to Mr. Wroth, and subsequently his successor at Llanvaches. Under the Commonwealth he preached much in London, was one of Cromwell's "Tryers," and helped forward the measures for the "Propagation of the Gospel in Wales." He died in 1659, on the eve of the Restoration. He deserves special recognition for the clearness and sturdiness of his views on religious liberty and toleration. He rejoiced to greet the day when, as he said, "there should be no ordinances to punish men for holding opinions; there should be no confessions of faith; . . . and in that day neither episcopacy, nor presbytery, nor any others should intermeddle or invade the rights of the saints." It is also believed that he was largely instrumental in getting the New Testament translated and

printed in Welsh, two editions being published in 1646 and 1647.

Under the Commonwealth scheme for propagating the Gospel in Wales, many Welsh ministers returned to their native parts who were commissioned to preach wherever they would. By this "roving commission" they became "itinerants," and it appears that, like the colporteur of to-day in Catholic countries, one part of their work was the circulation of the Scriptures. In fourteen years three editions of the New Testament and a large edition of the whole Bible were disposed of.

A memorable date in the history of Welsh Nonconformity is October 1st, 1649, when the first Baptist church was formed at Ilston, in Glamorganshire, mainly by the efforts of Mr. John Myles, a young man of signal ability and influence. The movement thus begun spread with great rapidity. It became a young men's movement; and when later on Henry Jessey avowed Baptist convictions and visited Wales in his new capacity, and when the cause received the advantage of Vavasour Powell's eloquent advocacy, it is not surprising that considerable success followed. While this movement was in progress the disciples of George Fox began to invade the Principality, and it must be admitted that the perplexity engendered by this confusion of tongues, and the uncharity that was the fruit of theological and doctrinal controversies, were anything but helpful to the spiritual life of the people, the great mass of whom were still absolutely unenlightened. Then came the Restoration and the various Acts for the extirpation of Dissent and the re-establishment of a hard-and-fast uniformity. More than a hundred clergymen were driven from their livings in 1662 in Wales, and the cruelties of the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts were as numerous and abominable in Wales as in other

parts of the kingdom. One good influence we must, however, attribute to those dark days of persecution. The differences between Nonconformists were hushed in the day of common suffering. Men and women of various denominations were thrust into the same prison, and discovered there a common loyalty to a common Lord. Baptist, Independent, Presbyterian, Quaker were made to feel that they were soldiers in the cause of freedom and spiritual Christianity, and that power to resist a cruel tyranny depended on the spirit of union among themselves. Though the times were bitter and gloomy, the sowing of the seed went on under the belief that better times must come sooner or later, and "every winter change to spring." Thomas Rees gives us a not inconsiderable catalogue of books published in Welsh between the dates of the Restoration and the Revolution; and nobody can explain away the significance of the fact that in the fifty years between 1640-1690 ten editions of the Scriptures in the Welsh language were issued, five of the whole Bible and five of the New Testament, and of these "only one folio edition of about 1,000 copies for the pulpits of parish churches was published by Churchmen." In connection with this work of publishing books in the Welsh language the work of Mr. Thomas Gouge deserves honourable mention. With what appears like inconsistency, he busied himself to found schools in Wales in which to teach the children English. In this work he met with only partial success. His zeal for printing Puritan books in the language of the people gives him a more enduring claim upon their gratitude.

After the passing of the Act of Toleration considerable activity was manifested among Nonconformists, especially in South Wales. Many chapels were erected, and many of the ejected ministers resumed their active

and open labours. Yet, notwithstanding all that was done, even on the most generous estimate, not more than one-eighth of the entire population could be called Nonconformist when the Methodist revival began. Seven-eighths of the people were either nominally or actually in connection with the Established Church. In 1735 North Wales did not contain more than ten congregations of dissenters. In South Wales the Nonconformist Churches were more numerous, but the indifference and unfaith which had crept over England had not left Wales unaffected. The general condition of the people was very low, and in scores of parishes nothing whatever was done to elevate or enlighten them. Education for the poor did not exist. Many vicars and rectors did not preach in their parish churches for months together, and when they did, preached in English to a Welsh-speaking congregation. Sunday was a day of sports, not of the most refined sort. John Wesley, whose experience, however, was not as extensive in regard to Wales as to England, declared that the Welsh were "as little versed in the principles of Christianity as a Creek or a Cherokee Indian."

The most that can be said is that the self-denying evangelistic labours of the earlier Nonconformists and the circulation of Scriptures and popular Puritan literature had done something to prepare the way for the generation of evangelism that we have now to describe. The beginning of better things in Wales is very properly traced to the educational efforts of a devoted clergyman named Griffith Jones, of Llanddowror. He was a powerful preacher, contemptuous of ecclesiastical conventions, with a puritan zeal against the demoralising influences of fairs and wakes, and willing whenever his bigoted brethren refused him their pulpits to exhort the crowds who followed him in the churchyard. But

great as was his popularity as a preacher, it is as an educationalist that he is best remembered. The system he devised, known as "circulating schools," was a happy stroke of invention. He engaged a number of schoolmasters and sent them from district to district to teach children and adults to read, and also to instruct them in the catechism and in psalmody. Griffith Jones did not make the mistake which had neutralised the value of Mr. Gouge's work. He taught the people to read books in their own tongue. So successful was his plan from the first, that he went on to found a seminary for the training of these teachers. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge gave their support, and collections at the Sacrament were freely given for this purpose. The first school was founded in 1730, and in less than ten years a hundred schools had come into existence, while some years later it was reckoned that "10,000 scholars were taught to read in a single year." It seems to be true that necessity drove Griffith Jones to draw his teachers very largely from the Nonconformists, which accounts for the fact that among so many of the clergy his scheme was viewed with disfavour. His own orthodoxy, moreover, was freely impeached. He was accused of saying that a man had as much right to choose his own minister as his own doctor or lawyer, a counsel of common sense exceedingly irritating to the clerically-minded. It should be said that his parents were Nonconformists, and that his opinions on many important points were far more closely in agreement with Nonconformity than with the general episcopal belief. Griffith Jones's educational work, by teaching the people to read the Bible, made the work of the evangelists more durable. The leader of the Methodist revival in Wales was a layman, Howell Harries by name. He is described by

Thomas Rees as "the most successful preacher that ever ascended a pulpit or a platform in Wales." Despite this fact, however, he was frequently repulsed when he sought ordination in the Established Church, where there were sinecures to be found for men of impiety and incompetence, but no place for this young enthusiast, whose soul was on fire with the love of God and man. His loyalty to the episcopal church was only less remarkable than her indifference or hostility to him. When he was just of age a saying of his vicar, that those who were not fit to come to the Lord's Table were neither fit to live nor die, went like an arrow to his conscience. After a period of heart-searching and inward agony, he found light and peace, and became at the same time painfully aware of what he calls "the universal deluge of swearing, lying, reviling, drunkenness, fighting, and gaming" that had "overspread the country." Against these giant evils this young man went up with his sling and stone. He had gone to Oxford for educational purposes, but wearying of the unreality and levity of the place, he left at the end of one term, and set out to itinerate Wales. He took up his parable against the vices and abuses of the age, and the courage and freedom of his denunciations made him an object of fierce resentment to the mob. He declared that naturally he was a man of weak spirit and poor memory, but that he was specially empowered to endure dangers and to discourse to the multitude. Some of his escapes were little short of miraculous; more than once he was left for dead. He was beaten, stoned, and trampled on by his adversaries. One of his companions was killed outright. All the forms of intimidation that were used against the Methodists in England were used against him. The Press-gang seized his helpers; women hearers had their clothes torn off them. But within six or seven years

he had roused Wales. He had revived public and private worship, and he had fairly destroyed many of the vicious sports and festivals of licentiousness in the country. He early formed acquaintanceship with Wesley and Whitefield, with the latter of whom he was very intimate. Whitefield, indeed, presided as moderator at the first Methodist Association in Wales, held in January, 1743. The attachment of Harries and his friends to the Established Church is very manifest in the proceedings of the association. Welsh Methodism followed the line of development of English Methodism, and became a Free Church without knowing it. Sixty or seventy years later, having discovered that they actually were in separation from the Establishment, they took the formal step, and it is safe to say that no religious body in the United Kingdom to-day is more jealous and proud of its Free Church privileges than Calvinistic Methodism.

For many years the closest ally and most powerful associate of Howell Harries was the Rev. Daniel Rowlands, who was "curate of the parishes of Nantcwulle and Llangeitho, at a salary of £10 a year." He was deeply affected by a sermon preached by Griffith Jones in 1735, and at the same time he came much under the influence of the Rev. Philip Pugh, a neighbouring Independent minister. He now followed the example of Griffith Jones and Harries and gave himself to an itinerating ministry, in which his remarkable powers were exercised with astonishing effects. From several counties people would flock to his services, and it is said that he sometimes administered the sacrament to two thousand persons. On one notable occasion he is reported to have preached for "six hours without intermission to a spell-bound multitude." In his earlier references to Mr. Rowlands, Howell Harries bears

eloquent testimony to the power of his ministry; but after a while differences of opinion arose between them, the exact origin of which is uncertain. The upshot was that in 1747 there was an open rupture of the two parties. The dispute was partially concerned, at all events, with the position of laymen such as Harries in the Methodist organisation. For a time the influence of Rowlands carried the day, and the vast majority of societies sided with him; yet it is probable that the steady growth of lay influence in Calvinistic Methodism was largely due to a recognition of the part which Harries had had in the creation and development of the movement. A crowning act of episcopal folly in Wales was the withdrawal by the Bishop of St. David's of Daniel Rowlands' licence to preach, in consequence of his methods of itinerancy. The invincible impatience of the episcopal Church with unconventional proceedings, even when they produce the best results in moral and spiritual progress, has been the fruitful parent of Nonconformity everywhere in England and Wales. In this instance the action of the bishop was, in the words of Mr. Lecky, "one of the causes that contributed most powerfully to precipitate Wales into Nonconformity." Howell Harries retired to Trevecca, where he erected a large building to house a number of friends who desired to live with him. It was a curious experiment of no very practical value, but it kept him in close touch with the Countess of Huntingdon's college; and at Trevecca he died in 1773. Mr. Rowlands lived seventeen years longer, interesting himself in the progress of the Methodist societies. Some difficult and unhappy years of controversy abated the evangelistic zeal of the new body, and the drift of many of the Independent churches towards Unitarianism resulted in a definite severance in the year 1771, from which period the progress of

Independency in Wales has been steady and often rapid. The latter years of the eighteenth century were marked by a series of religious revivals from which the Nonconformist churches greatly benefited.

Other countries have had their philosophers, poets, statesmen, and social reformers, but in Wales the preachers supplied the highest stimulus to the national life. They were philosophers and theologians; they were eminent in sacred poetry and hymnody; they were reformers of the moral and social condition of the poor; they were the organisers of national education. Very largely they created the literature of modern Wales, and they have steadily cultivated the national sentiment. No land has owed so much to its preachers. No preaching friars in any century have produced such an effect as the travelling preachers of Wales produced in the revival periods. Those thrilling services on the hill-sides attended by vast multitudes, when the minor melodies of Welsh hymnody seem to blend all souls in one emotion and one experience, and when some prophet-spirit calls the listening thousands to God, have become a notable feature in the life of the Principality. How simply and poorly the preachers lived who won Wales for faith and purity anyone may discover who will read such a life as that of the great Baptist preacher, Christmas Evans. He and his wife lived in a little low hut in Anglesey on a salary of £17 a year. Christmas Evans was a man of commanding stature, and he could barely stand upright in his home. The door, old and decayed, afforded little shelter from the wind. He had nothing that could, except by courtesy, be called a bed. As the boards of the floor grew rotten, their place was filled with bare stones. His few books, bought at the price of self-denial, were his chief treasure. Yet he was able to spare subscriptions to the great

societies just formed, and to minister to the relief of the sick and necessitous. The man who lived thus in habitual poverty was a man of brilliant imagination and rhetorical genius, whose name and fame were known throughout the land. And these men, emotional and rhetorical as they were for the most part, enjoyed a keen intellectual activity. When Sandemanianism, as it was called, invaded Wales, resolving faith into intellectual assent, it was for a time eagerly embraced by these open-minded thinkers. Christmas Evans surrendered to the spell of it, until the bitter experience that all power was withering from his ministry drove him to re-examine the foundations of faith. The revivals may seem to many periods of unhealthy excitement; but they must be judged by their fruits, and they awakened the spirit of inquiry and made men thoughtful. Wales became a nation of theologians. The minds of men and women buised themselves with great problems of life and death, duty, and destiny.

The exact date at which those marvellous auxiliaries of Free Church work in Wales, the Sunday-schools, began to be formed is uncertain. There is no doubt however, that the saintly Thomas Charles, of Bala, deserves the title of Father of Sunday-schools in Wales. Charles was ejected from three curacies in the Establishment by the almost incredible animus of the authorities against religious earnestness. Then he definitely associated himself with the Methodist movement, in which he became a noble and powerful leader. Although there had been isolated Sunday-schools previous to 1788, notably those started by Dr. Edward Williams, of Oswestry, yet the Sunday-school movement proper owed most to the genius of Thomas Charles. In addition to this great work he became the founder of the British and Foreign Bible Society. No story is better known

THOMAS CHARLES, OF BALA.

(By kind permission of the British and Foreign Bible Society.)

than how the zeal of the poor peasant maid, Mary Jones, to possess a copy of the Bible, and her extreme difficulty in obtaining one fired the soul of Thomas Charles, who did not rest until he had called into existence the committee which was to establish one of the greatest societies of the modern world. "Within four years of the formation of the society 60,000 copies of the Welsh Bible and 45,000 copies of the New Testament separately were published." Mr. Charles was prominent in Welsh Methodism when, in 1811, the definite separation from the Established Church took place. He was himself convinced of the necessity for the step, and became one of the leaders in the new Free Church thus happily formed. The success of Calvinistic Methodism under conditions of absolute liberty has been remarkable and gratifying; and it has taken its fair share in all movements for the religious and political progress of the country.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fruits of the Revival.

The Methodist Revival was a tree of life bearing various kinds of fruit. One of the most notable and permanent was in *an enlarged Christian hymnody*. John Wesley himself was responsible for some very noble translations of celebrated German hymns, especially such as gave expression to his doctrine of Christian Perfection. But Charles Wesley was the sacred lyrist in whose hymns the new spiritual experiences of the Revival are set to music. Charles Wesley was even more ecclesiastically-minded than his elder brother; and the description of him on his monument at City Road Chapel, "a sincere friend to the Church of England," exactly expresses the truth. Every departure from what was regular and traditional was a shock to his feelings; every innovation troubled his natural conservatism. Yet he was driven out of his curacy at Islington Parish Church by the determined antagonism of the churchwardens on account of his Evangelical beliefs; he boldly defied the interdict of the Archbishop on his field preaching; he shared to the full the indignities and persecutions that the pioneers of Methodism had to endure; and as a tribute to his spiritual power we may remember that Whitefield acknowledged that he owed his conversion to Charles Wesley. That the latter regarded it as his mission to strengthen and not weaken the Established

CHARLES WESLEY.

Church is plain from his lines, in which, after rebuking the persecuting spirit, he exclaims :—

> Thrust out as from her pale, I gladly roam,
> Banished myself, to bring her wanderers home.

He was perhaps the most prolific hymn-writer who ever lived, and many of his compositions will last as long as the language. "Jesu, Lover of my soul," is probably the best known and most popular of his hymns; but the verses entitled "Wrestling Jacob," beginning "Come, O Thou Traveller unknown," are the finest effort of his genius. Dr. Watts declared they were worth all the poetry he himself had ever written, a generous estimate with which few will agree. It is noteworthy that Handel composed tunes to three of Charles Wesley's hymns, "O Love Divine," "Rejoice, the Lord is King," and "Sinners, obey the Gospel Word." The most remarkable characteristic of his hymns is the spirit of exultant hope, faith and joy that breathes in every verse of them. They were as wings to lift the soul above its doubts and sorrows. They were songs of conquest. Theirs was not the plaintive music of disquietude and misgiving, but the triumph pæan of a redeemed and victorious army. Charles Wesley's hymns did not invite morbid introspection; they carried the soul out of itself in praise and adoration. Through these glorious psalms came the exhortation to play the man and rejoice in Christian privilege. Never had the age of unfaith seemed so mean a heritage for a Christian nation as when the Revival theology in the hymns of Charles Wesley answered Pope's metrical version of the philosophy of Bolingbroke.

In a somewhat different key, and of a more subdued strain, were the Olney Hymns, the joint productions of William Cowper and John Newton. Cowper was the

poet of the Revival; doing probably more than anyone else to popularise its teaching in intellectual circles. His panegyric on Whitefield, his eulogy of John Howard, and his many famous descriptions of his ideal Evangelical ministry, sufficiently proclaim his sympathies. He belonged to that section of Methodism which remained within the Establishment; but he cultivated intimate relations with some Dissenters—notably, the Rev. William Bull, Independent minister of Newport Pagnell. When a Birmingham mob destroyed the house, the books, and the scientific apparatus of the famous Dr. Priestley, scientist and Unitarian minister, because of his outspoken approval of the French Revolution, and his militant dissent, Cowper breaks out in one of his letters, "What a horrid zeal for the Church, and what a horrid loyalty to Government have manifested themselves there! How little do they dream that they could not have dishonoured their idol, the Establishment, more, and that the great Bishop of souls Himself with abhorrence rejects their service." Cowper was greatly under the ascendency of the striking personality of John Newton, who passed through every phase of vice until shipwreck, and the reading of Thomas à Kempis, brought him to himself, and to an awakened sense of God and duty. From the lowest deeps of a filthy blasphemer, helping to navigate a slave-ship off the coast of Africa, Newton passed to fervid Evangelism and rigorous piety; and as parish minister at Olney wielded immense influence over the gentle, susceptible spirit of Cowper. The hymns which they contributed together have not the fire and passion of Wesley's, but some of them, such as "Hark my soul, it is the Lord," "God moves in a mysterious way," "Heal us, Emmanuel, we are here," "Jesus, where'er Thy people meet," and "Sometimes a light surprises" are among the finest

JOHN HOWARD.

(From an old Engraving.)

in the language. Among those outside the ranks of Methodism who, nevertheless, rejoiced in the success of the Evangelists, and was frequently visited by them, was Philip Doddridge. He traced his descent from one of the ejected ministers, and from a Bohemian who was exiled for conscience' sake; and though he was the subject of tempting offers if he would abandon Nonconformity, he never wavered in his allegiance to his inherited principles. After several smaller charges, he was elected minister of a large church in Northampton, where he established a seminary for training ministers which was eminently useful. It would not be easy to exaggerate the nobility of Dr. Doddridge's character. In a lukewarm generation he was distinguished for his fervour; and he was absolutely free from any narrow and bitter sectarianism. His book on "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" had an enormous circulation. Some of his hymns, such as "Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve," glow with the passion of the great Revival. We have already referred to the contributions of Toplady and Olivers to Christian hymnody. In the best modern hymn-books it is safe to say a very large proportion of hymns represent the faith and aspirations kindled in the Revival period. Another fruit of the Revival was seen in the new impulse given to social reform. In a very humble way Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, began to organise a Sunday-school movement. He hired "four decent women" to teach a number of ragged urchins to read and say their catechism on the Sunday. He himself lured them to the school with buns or hot potatoes. The decoy succeeded; and the results surpassed all expectations. The fame of the Gloucester Sunday-school penetrated to London, with the result that the Sunday-School Union was formed on an unsectarian basis. Sunday-schools were the talk of the

day. The Nonconformists threw themselves with ardour into the new scheme. That devout Churchwoman, Hannah More, had extraordinary success with her schools in Gloucestershire. To-day the Sunday-school is a necessary adjunct of Free Church work in every city, town and village.

A further direction in which the new moral energy called into activity by the Revival made itself felt was *prison reform*. An interest in the spiritual condition of prisoners had been shown by the Revivalists themselves. Whitefield and the Wesleys had made a special point of preaching in the prisons. There is a letter in John Wesley's journal rejoicing in the improvements that had taken place in the prison at Bristol. But anything like a systematic attack on these dens of filth and disease, and any attempt to improve the character of prison discipline had yet to be made. The two names that will ever be associated with prison reform in England are John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, both of whom were Nonconformists.

John Howard was first of all a member of the Independent Church at Stoke Newington, and afterwards of Bunyan Church, Bedford. When the minister of the latter church adopted Baptist principles, John Howard, with others, seceded and formed a new church which now bears his name, and of which he was an honoured member to the day of his death. In his letters the warmth of his religious feelings is evidenced by frequent ejaculations of faith and joy. His Puritanism was strikingly manifested when he built himself a house in Bedford, so that he might be near his place of worship and avoid travelling on Sunday. His early efforts at reform concerned the cottages on his estate. On the death of his second wife in 1765, when Howard was about forty years of age, he sought relief

in travel. The ship in which he was a passenger was seized by a French privateer, and Howard made acquaintance with the inside of a Continental prison. The impression lasted through a lifetime. On his release he made powerful representations as to the sufferings of English prisoners of war, and was the means of ameliorating their condition. The next milestone in his life-story is his election to the shrievalty of Bedford in 1773. His occupancy of this office directed his attention to the condition of the town gaol and the system by which the gaolers extorted money even from prisoners who were declared innocent, often detaining them for months until exorbitant and illegal fees were paid. No brigands were more successful in wringing ransom out of their victims than the keepers of the prisons of the eighteenth century out of unfortunates who came within their power. Howard was told that the system could not be altered because it prevailed everywhere. He set himself to discover whether this was true, and made his first tour of English prisons, bridewells, and houses of correction. The effect was seen later on in Parliamentary legislation on the question, and Howard received the unique honour of being called to the bar of the House of Commons, and presented by Mr. Speaker with the nation's thanks for his "humanity and zeal shown in visiting the several gaols of this kingdom." We cannot follow him in his foreign pilgrimages through France, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Russia, Spain, and Portugal; nor can we tell in detail how he visited the lazarettos in the East in the hope of discovering some remedies for the plague and gaol-fever from which English prisoners suffered so severely. He died at Kherson, in Russia, having caught fever from a lady whom he nursed until she died; and at Dauphigny near Kherson he sleeps under "a small brick pyramid,"

but verily his works do follow him. As his epitaph in St. Paul's Cathedral says, "He trod an open but unfrequented path to immortality in the ardent and unintermitted exercise of Christian charity."

A generation passed before the work of Howard was actively resumed. Then Elizabeth Fry began to tread the same "open but unfrequented path." She belonged to that brilliant Quaker family, the Gurneys of Earlham, near Norwich. Her brother-in-law and coadjutor in many of her enterprises was Thomas Fowell Buxton, who won for himself imperishable fame in the cause of emancipation. Her brother, Joseph John Gurney, was a man of very noble evangelistic and philanthropic spirit, whose work for the Society of Friends at home and abroad was invaluable and unremitting. Elizabeth Gurney married Mr. Joseph Fry when she was twenty years of age, and though she had a numerous family, found time for that beautiful ministry to the women convicts at Newgate, and all those fruitful labours which changed so marvellously the conditions of prison life. When Mrs. Fry began her work all the "female felons" and those awaiting their trial were herded together, three hundred of them, with many wretched and neglected children, into two wards and two cells.

At this time there were some three hundred crimes on the English calendar that were punishable by death, and the women condemned to suffer execution were in the same ward with girls not yet tried. The horror of some of the scenes witnessed there defies description. These wards and cells were the awful home of the most depraved and abandoned women in England. Through a grating they thrust out hands for money to the passers-by, and then fought like mad creatures for its possession. The victors in the contest exchanged the dole for fiery

ELIZABETH FRY.

(From an old Engraving.)

spirits. Passions were inflamed; the very air reeked with filthy language and the foul stench that always pervaded these crowded rooms. Women about to die would go about with ashen faces and beads of sweat upon their brows, only to be mocked by others, or bidden to drown their fear in drink. Elizabeth Fry was a young Quaker matron of thirty-three when she first entered this earthly inferno. Her fine spiritual face was in itself a vision of heaven to spirits in prison, and her sweet, solemn, penetrating voice, thrilling with pity and earnestness, struck even the worst and most hardened criminals into respect, and frequently moved them to a very passion of remorse. Those who were present at her first visit never believed that she would come again. But she knew that she had found her work. Her visitation became systematic. She read and expounded the Bible, prayed with those who did not know how to pray for themselves, clothed the naked, comforted and strengthened those about to die, taught the children, until a very miracle of reform was wrought in that depraved society, a transformation which was beheld with amazement by those who had ridiculed her mission as a piece of Quixotry. The consequence was that public attention was again directed to the question of prison reform and to the cruelty of the execution laws. Aided by many powerful and disinterested voices, and not least by the pencil of the great caricaturist Cruikshank, Elizabeth Fry's work resulted in the speedy repeal of some of the cruellest laws, and ultimately in the abolition of public executions, and of capital punishment for any offences except murder and treason. She was indefatigable also in missions to the members of her own Society and in promoting schemes for the benefit of seamen and domestic servants, as well as for discharged prisoners. She was one of the

originators of the order of "Nursing Sisters," an enterprise which in its many forms has contributed so greatly to the comfort and happiness of the poor. She lived till 1845, and passed away full of years and honours, to be written in the chronicles of humanity as one who loved her fellow-men.

An even more majestic form which the new passion for social reform, born of the revival impulse, took was the agitation for *the emancipation of the slaves.* The very day before John Wesley the aged sank into final unconsciousness he wrote a letter to William Wilberforce which surely deserves to be called the most remarkable dying testament ever penned. We make no apology for printing it in full.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Unless Divine Power has raised you up to be an *Athanasius contra mundum,* I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villany, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary in well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American Slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. That He Who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir, your affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

In these stirring words the veteran Evangelist thundered out his soul. Some years previously Wilberforce recorded in his diary the deep impression produced upon him when calling one day at the house of Hannah More, Charles Wesley, who was present, came forward and blessed him so solemnly and affectionately that he burst into tears. Among those who were in full sympathy

with the Wesleys and who had remained in the Establishment, the "Clapham Sect" as they were called, formed one of the most remarkable groups of men who ever spent themselves in the service of Christian civilisation. The names of William Wilberforce, Granville Sharpe, Thomas Clarkson, Zachary Macaulay, and James Stephen are to-day beyond the reach of the sneers of those who endeavoured while they lived to depreciate their work. When all honour has been done to these men and to Thomas Fowell Buxton, who all belonged to the Evangelical school in the Church of England, we must not forget that the members of the Society of Friends were solid for emancipation, that most of the Methodists shared the sympathies of their leaders, that the Baptist denomination did yoeman's service for the movement, and indeed that the overwhelming majority of Dissenters all the kingdom over were passionate adherents of the good cause. No man exposed the cruelties and iniquities of the slave system more searchingly and fearlessly than the Rev. William Knibb, the famous Baptist missionary whose work for the negroes of Jamaica is worthy of lasting remembrance. When he visited England, and took up his parable against slavery, the timorous besought him to be moderate. Friends of missions feared that their cause might suffer from the unpopularity of the abolitionist. But the iron had entered into William Knibb's soul, and he could not talk ambiguities. He roundly declared that "infidels, clergymen, and magistrates had combined to banish Nonconformist ministers from the land," so that the slave might lose his best friends and advocates. But "at the risk of my connection with the society," he went on, "I will avow this; and if the friends of missions will not have me I will turn and tell it to my God; nor will I desist till this greatest of curses, slavery, is re-

moved and 'Glory to God in the Highest' is inscribed upon the British flag." It was not wonderful that such fearless advocacy of emancipation created a deep impression wherever he went. But though so many did virtuously, it is the barest justice to say that the Quakers excelled all others. For generations they had slowly but surely educated the public conscience. None had given such straightforward application to the Christian doctrine of man as they had. When committees began to be formed to press forward the cause of emancipation, everywhere Quakers took the lead; and though the Parliamentary work had to be done, and was nobly done, by others, the clear enunciation of the principles which guided and inspired the agitation was the work in the first place of the Society of Friends. Whenever the full story of the anti-slavery movement is told, space will have to be found for the mission of that true saint and seer, John Woolman. A Christian knight-errant, as he has been called, vowed to the service of the poor and oppressed and enslaved, he came over to England from America to deliver a last testimony and exhortation, and to die in the delivery in 1772. Clothed in the "undyed homespun," which was his quiet protest against luxury, and testifiying ever, less with indignation than with sorrow, to the injustice and cruelty of the slave-traffic, his strong and gentle message, and his pure and holy personality produced a deep impression wherever he travelled. "John Woolman's gift was love," is the beautiful tribute paid to him whose "Journal" deserves to rank in the highest order of devotional literature, and to whose singular charm of spirit and speech, such writers as Channing, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Edward Irving, Dora Greenwell, and Whittier have done willing homage.

We shall not be wrong if we maintain that the revival

of faith and zeal meant among the elder Nonconformist bodies *a revival of political ideals* Roused out of the torpor into which they had been sinking, they recovered their ancient spirit, and began to speak with the old accent. It has been a striking characteristic of Nonconformity that its political sagacity has been so seldom at fault. Its theories have been justified in the event. If the voice of the Free Churches had been listened to, the American Colonies would have been saved for England. It was natural, doubtless, that English Nonconformists should sympathise with those who represented their own ideals. Across the thousands of miles of sea they united themselves in sympathy with the brave children of the Puritans who were defying British tyranny and dying in thousands for their independence. "The Dissenters," said Benjamin Franklin, "are all with us." Only John Wesley's political instinct failed him; and his attack on the colonists was unworthy of his shrewd intelligence and generous heart. English Nonconformity was not represented in Parliament, but when Burke and Chatham and Fox pleaded the cause of the Americans, the Free Churchmen at home had no need to be ashamed of the men who defended their opinions in the Legislature.

That Free Churchmen were not disposed to acquiesce for all time in the civil disabilities imposed upon them and the injustices to which they were subject had been shown in a striking way by the famous trial which was ended in 1767 by a very noble judgment of Lord Mansfield's. One of the most abominable forms of intolerance was a device due to the genius of the City of London. The Corporation had made a law that any man refusing to stand for the office of sheriff should be subject to a fine of £400 and twenty marks; and if he were elected and refused to serve, he should be fined £600. Inas-

much as every occupant of the office had to take the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, it was certain that most Nonconformists would refuse to serve and render themselves liable to these atrocious penalties. Dissenters were nominated for the office who were blind, or bedridden, and otherwise physically incapable of serving, and on their pleading inability the Corporation black-mail was levied upon them. It was neither more nor less than legalised and systematic robbery. The money thus extracted went to build the Mansion House; and in six years £15,000 was raised in this monstrous fashion. So satisfactory were these financial gains to the Corporation of the City of London that in 1754 they elected three Dissenters successively, Messrs. Sheafe, Streatfield, and Evans. By the advice of the Dissenting Deputies these men refused either to serve or to pay. The trial of their case lasted till January, 1767, a period of thirteen years, at the end of which time Mr. Evans alone survived, and he was on his death-bed. Lord Mansfield's judgment was a noble and worthy deliverance. He stigmatised the methods of the Corporation who, knowing that a law existed to exclude certain men from office, enacted a further law to punish them for this exclusion. He declared it was no crime to be a Dissenter, and that persecution was "against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy." The protection of the Toleration Act was asserted for Nonconformists, and the action of the City Corporation was pronounced illegal.

In fighting the battle of civil and religious liberty, the Unitarians at this time played a very distinguished part. No one was a more courageous and outspoken enemy of religious establishments and of disabilities inflicted for the sake of religious opinions than Dr. Joseph Priestley, and few men of his age had more to

suffer from the unreasoning prejudice of the mob. With him were associated such scholars and thinkers as Dr. Richard Price, Dr. Andrew Kippis, and Dr. Samuel Chandler. The moral and intellectual force of Nonconformity could not be ignored, and the time seemed ripe for the repeal of that part of the Toleration Act which required Nonconformists to subscribe the greater part of the Thirty-nine Articles. For this subscription it was now proposed to substitute a declaration of faith that the Holy Scriptures contain a revelation of the mind and will of God. The Bill easily passed the Commons; and the debate in the House of Lords was made memorable by reason of a splendid tribute paid by Earl Chatham to the Dissenters. The Archbishop of York had charged the Nonconformist ministers with being men "of close ambition." Earl Chatham accepted the phrase and amplified it. "They are so, my lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals, and to the doctrines of inspired apostles, not to the decrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a Scriptural and spiritual worship; we have a Calvinistic creed, a Popish liturgy, an Arminian clergy. The Reformation has laid open the Scriptures to all; let not the bishops shut them again. Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded which it would shock humanity to execute. It is said religious sects have done great mischief when they were not kept under restraints; but history affords no proof that sects have ever been mischievous when they were not oppressed and persecuted by the ruling Church."

Of course, the Bill was rejected by the Lords, as it was a second time in 1773; but it had the effect of ripening opinion among Nonconformists against all tests and subscriptions. The old timid halting between

two opinions which had weakened English Dissent so long was giving way to an enthusiastic agreement that the whole system of tests and creeds imposed by a civil power was rotten at the core. The ejected ministers of 1662 had acquiesced in a religious establishment and would have defended the theory. A hundred years had passed since then, and Nonconformity was winning its soul, and coming to see and to declare the beauty of the ideal of a free Church in a free State. To realise this ideal they had first to assert their rights as English citizens and demand equal treatment before the law. In this campaign no single individual, not even Dr. Joseph Priestley himself, did more valiant service than the eloquent and impassioned Baptist minister, Robert Robinson. Robinson was one of Whitefield's converts, and his first pastoral labours were in Norwich, where he adopted Baptist views. He afterwards removed to Cambridge, and there the great work of his life was done. He, too, held by the Unitarian position so far as it denied "*plurality*" and emphasized unity in the idea of Deity. At the same time it was no Unitarian in the modern sense who could say, "I affirm, because I believe, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God." But it is not as a theologian but as a vindicator of principles of liberty and justice in Church and State that Robert Robinson is best worthy of remembrance. He was a master of polemic, an eloquent advocate of principles which are the commonplaces of politics and religion to-day, a breezy and somewhat merciless controversialist. But he is emphatically a sign of the times. There is a confidence and passion in his challenge of State interference in religious matters that was a new thing in Nonconformity. He fell foul of the Twentieth Article which declares that the Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority

in controversies of faith, and calls it "an infamous piece of priestcraft," which it is "mere mummery" to subscribe. "The English Nonconformists," he exclaims, "absolutely deny all human authority in matters of religion—they deny it to all civil governments of every form—they think Jesus Christ the sole head of the Christian Church." "For their civil principles they are ready to die as *Britons*, and for their religious ones as *Christians*." As one reads Robinson and Priestley one feels that a new age is dawning. Nonconformists had too long been anxious to keep up a show of peace; the writings of Priestley and Robinson are a declaration of war. The firstfruits of this aggressive policy appeared in 1779, when, instead of the old subscription to articles of religion, there was substituted a general declaration of belief in the Scriptures as the qualification for exercising the office of Nonconformist minister. Eight years later a determined attempt was made to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. The injustice of excluding such a Christian gentleman as John Howard from the ordinary privileges of citizenship was eloquently insisted on in the House of Commons. Of course, Lord North declared that the Acts in question were "a great bulwark of the Constitution." Every infamous measure has been that in its time to an unenlightened conservatism. An interesting point about the debate was that a powerful deputation had waited upon Charles James Fox to solicit his advocacy of the repeal. Fox, although apparently uninformed previously as to the merits of the question, was fully persuaded by the arguments he heard, and went down to the House to deliver a forcible and statesmanlike speech on the measure. The proposal was rejected; but a vigorous agitation followed throughout the kingdom, in the course of which the reform platform was broadened to include

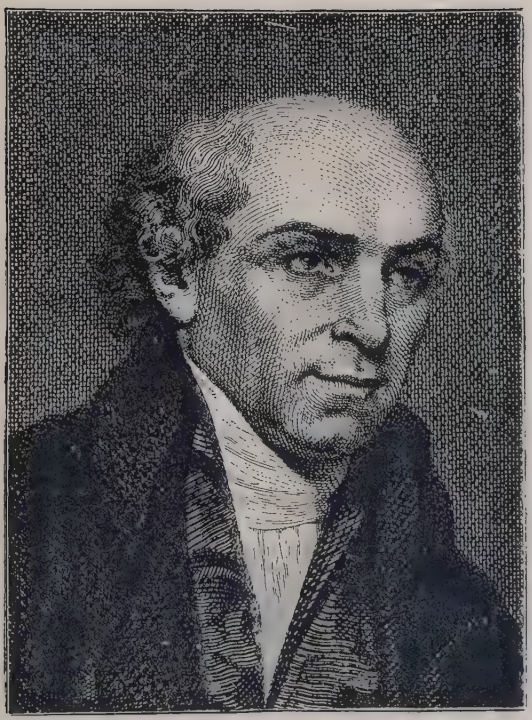
the removal of every disability from which Nonconformists suffered. This inspiriting programme put life into those who had hitherto been listless. The Dissenting Deputies and all sections of Nonconformists threw themselves with ardour into the fray. A second attempt to carry their measure through Parliament was defeated by a narrow majority of twenty. Then Fox himself took charge of the motion, and in the course of one of his ablest and noblest speeches, declared that the cause of the Dissenters was identified with the universal rights of mankind. The uncharity of the Test Act contradicted the foundation principle of Christianity. Religion ought to be *established* by the truth of its own evidence, and not by the power of the secular arm. In answer to this Pitt raised the old cry, "The Church in danger," and Burke intimated that the rights of property were in peril. This was enough to scare away the average member of Parliament from the justest proposition, and the motion was rejected by a majority of nearly two hundred. The defeat of the motion was followed by a violent agitation against Dissenters who, on account of their sympathy with the French Revolution, were represented as Nihilists, the enemies of law and order, and the subverters of monarchy and religion. As we have seen, Dr. Priestley's house was burned to the ground, and the mob endeavoured to establish by riot what they had no prospect of establishing by reason.

After the storm there was a period of comparative quiet, and the controversy between Church and Dissent did not assume an acute form until, in 1810, Viscount Sidmouth, alarmed at the growth of Nonconformity, designed to impose new restrictions on the Free Church ministry. The Bill was a fatuous and insulting measure, proposing that "six respectable house-keepers" should

certify the qualifications of a Nonconformist minister. It was ignominiously rejected; but it served a purpose little intended by its author. It called into existence a new confederation of Dissenters called "The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty." The son of the well-known Rev. Matthew Wilks, of Moorfields, was now a member of Parliament, and he became one of the secretaries, and a most eloquent advocate of the Society. Its vigour and efficiency may be partly gauged from the fact that within a year "it had succeeded in obtaining the repeal of the Quakers' Oaths, Conventicle and Five-Mile Acts." They had been practically inoperative for years, but it was an evidence of changing feeling that these public stigmas on Dissent were now removed from the statute-book. The next success was the repeal of the odious old law which subjected Unitarians to penalties for blasphemy. Gratified by these concessions the Dissenters made no protest against the Church dipping her hand in the coffers of the State to build churches and pay her ministers. In 1818 a cool million was appropriated for Church extension. As Lord Holland said, the Dissenters were calmly told that although they had to pay for their own chapels and their own ministers, they must pay "for the erection of churches in which they had no interest whatever." The injustice was palpable enough, but the Dissenters themselves seem to have felt that it would be ungracious to protest. The years 1827 and 1828 will always be memorable for the renewed agitation for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the final success of that remarkable movement. Lord John Russell took charge of the Bill, which was received this time in a very different spirit in both Houses. The bishops were conciliatory, and it was recognised on all sides that the degradation of the Sacrament into a political engine

had injured the character of religion. It had taken the Church of England one hundred and forty years to make that discovery; and thirty years previously the men who had boldly denounced the offence had had their houses burned above their heads, and had been compelled to flee from the hands of the mob. Now, all was moderation. The Free Church contention was recognised as just; and although an amendment by Mr. Robert Peel had to be accepted requiring all magistrates and municipal officers to promise not to endeavour to injure or subvert the Established Church or disturb it in the possession of its rights and privileges, the victory was complete. On the 27th of March, 1828, the Test and Corporation Acts vanished out of the statute-law of England.

Leaving for another chapter the further developments of the political influence of Free Churchmen, there remains to be described the one of all movements due to the Revival which has had the most world-wide effects—*the modern missionary movement.* The Puritan Churches of the Commonwealth were not indifferent to the claims of the heathen world; and on Cromwell's initiative collections were made throughout the country on behalf of John Eliot's missionary labours among the American Indians. But when the Puritan spirit was broken at the Restoration, the Church was too much engaged in trying to extirpate Dissent at home, to be able to spare much thought for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ. Neither was the period of declining faith at the beginning of the eighteenth century favourable for the renewal of the enterprise. But when that religious spirit, which is ineradicable from the English people, revived under the preaching of the Evangelists, the Home Missionary enthusiasm became the parent of an enthusiasm for Foreign Missions.



WILLIAM CAREY.

(Taken from an old Engraving)

We have seen that both Wesley and Whitefield interested themselves in missionary work in the colony of Georgia. There are passages in the journals of Wesley in which he expresses his admiration for the heroic labours of Brainerd; and he could not come, as he did, under the influence of the Moravian Church, that mother of modern missions, without a kindling of the imagination and quickening of the faith. The Countess of Huntingdon just failed to become the founder of the first English missionary society. Dr. Haweis, one of her chaplains and rector of Aldwinkle, having been deeply moved by a reading of Captain Cook's "Voyages," communicated his interest to the Countess; and four men were actually selected to be missionaries to the South Seas, but their faith and courage failed at the last, and the enterprise was postponed. Pride of place was to belong to one who was in a far lowlier social position than the Countess; one, too, who offered himself for the sacred service, and whose faith never failed and whose courage never faltered. Even to-day we are very far from doing justice to the founder of our modern British missions. William Carey is one of the greatest Englishmen of all time. Born to a very humble lot, with few educational advantages, and what to most people would have been the narrow horizon of village life, he triumphed over every difficulty, studied and mastered many languages, cultivated a faculty of scientific observation, and above all rose to the most comprehensive faith in the destiny of the Christian Gospel, and the Christian civilisation. At fourteen he was apprenticed to a shoemaker at Hackleton in Northamptonshire. He united himself to the little Baptist Church at Olney, and some three years later became pastor of a congregation at Moulton, where he received £15 a year, and supplemented this income by teaching and cobbling. As he sat on his

shoemaker's bench he could look up from time to time at a map of the world of his own making, annotated with remarks on the population, religion, and manners of the various countries. In course of time he removed to Leicester, where he had enlarged opportunities of expounding his ideal. The story goes that at a meeting of the Association of Particular Baptist Churches he was asked to name a subject for discussion, and he proposed the following :—"Whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory on all ministers and churches to the end of the world" ; whereupon old John Ryland exclaimed, "Sit down, young man; when God wants to convert the world He will do it without your help." Nothing discouraged by the apathy of his seniors and leaders, Carey wrote what has been called the greatest missionary treatise ever written, "An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens." This was in 1789, and in 1792 the "Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathens" was founded at Kettering. The place where this historic event occurred was "the back parlour of the Widow Beebe Wallis." Twelve persons were present ; and a collection was taken amounting to £13 2s. 6d., which provoked the wit of Sydney Smith, and the scorn of superior persons generally. One of the founders was the apostolic Andrew Fuller, whose words are worth remembering, "When we began in 1792 there was little or no respectability among us, not so much as a squire to sit in the chair, or an orator to make speeches to him. Hence good Dr. Stennett advised the London ministers to stand aloof, and not commit themselves." Dr. Stennett's advice was very generally adopted, but nothing could chill the ardour of Carey. He offered himself as the first

missionary, in spite of the entreaties of his Church and the vehement objections of his wife. It was well-known, moreover, that the East India Company would permit no missionary to land in India under their auspices. The comrade found for Carey proved to be deeply involved in debt, in consequence of which both missionaries were unceremoniously put ashore, with the loss of most of their passage money. Still the valiant Carey did not lose heart. A Danish ship was found, and in 1793, while the eyes of all the world were turned on France whose people were in the throes of revolution, Carey did verily sail away to India, to begin there a work that put to shame all the doubts and criticisms of the Church at home. By preaching, teaching, and printing the Gospel, Carey and his worthy associates Marshman and Ward—the cobbler, the weaver, and the printer—fairly revolutionised contemporary Christian opinion in regard to missions. Carey lived to be honoured by all whose honour was worth the having; and Lord Wellesley declared that he esteemed the approbation of Carey "a greater honour than the applause of Courts and Parliaments." Henry Martyn traces his own missionary impulse to the wonderful story of Carey's devotion. Neither can any student of Indian history forget that in the dark days of the Mutiny England's hopes were fixed on two men—on John Lawrence, one of Carey's students, and on Henry Havelock, the intrepid Baptist General, whose heroic wife was the daughter of Dr. Marshman, Carey's comrade at Serampore. The sneers of Sydney Smith seem singularly cheap in the light of the marvellous influence which William Carey exercised on the fortunes of Christianity, and of the British Empire in the East. Practising his own sermon, the "converted cobbler" had attempted great things for God, and expected great things from

God, and the result was a magnificent vindication of his daring faith and service.

The first missionary society was thus strictly denominational. The second was a new experiment. It was nothing less than a union of Christian people in the service of an un-Christian world. Carey's letters from India produced an immense impression, and many began to feel that if the Baptist Society could do this, those Churches that were not Baptist churches must make a similar attempt. Dr. Bogue, the Independent minister of Gosport, addressed a letter in the columns of the newly-started *Evangelical Magazine*, pressing the missionary call upon "those Dissenters who practise infant baptism." Dr. Haweis, whose earlier enthusiasm we have noted, addressed glowing words to the Evangelical members of the Church of England, offered £500 for the equipment of the first missionaries, and suggested the South Sea Islands as the sphere of work. Money flowed in. A representative committee was formed, and at a great inaugural conference the London Missionary Society was founded "to send neither Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, nor Independency to the heathen, but simply the Gospel of Christ." The practical result of this unique confederation of Christians of various denominations was seen when in August, 1796, the ship *Duff*, purchased and equipped by the new society, sailed from the Thames for the South Seas with twenty-nine missionaries on board. We cannot recount the tragic experiences that awaited them, nor relate the heroic steadfastness and ultimate triumph of some. Among them all Henry Nott stands out as a veritable apostle, who, through good report and ill, endured hardness as a soldier of Christ, and lived to see the break up of heathenism and the dawn of a brighter and happier day.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society may be said to have established itself gradually. As we have seen, the Wesleys and Whitefield had had some experience of mission work among the negroes in the West Indies. The man whose motto was "the world is my parish" could not differentiate in his thoughts evangelistic work abroad from similar work at home. In Carey's famous pamphlet sympathetic reference is made to the work which some of Mr. Wesley's ministers were doing "among the Caribs and negroes." There was one man, however, who must always be remembered as the very soul of the missionary movement in Methodism. No more consecrated spirit ever breathed than Dr. Thomas Coke. He had been a clergyman of the Church of England, but his evangelical passion had occasioned his dismissal, and he offered his services to Wesley, who discerned his real worth and power. On one of his visits to the Wesleyan societies in America, the ship was driven under stress of weather to seek shelter in Antigua, and Dr. Coke was so moved by the condition of the negroes there that he started Christian work among them, and was able to report in 1786 that eleven hundred negroes were in membership in Antigua. So intense was his zeal, that on his return to England he himself carried out a house-to-house collection for missions. As is recorded in a Minute of Conference in 1815, "he stooped to the very drudgery of charity and gratuitously pleaded the cause of a perishing world from door to door." He gave his money to the work as lavishly as he gave himself, holding nothing back, and fairly shaming the unenthusiastic into a measure of generosity. Neither was he contented with the West Indian missions. He heard "the East a-calling," and set himself to make its cry understood by his countrymen. He is reported to have said to Adam Clarke, "I

am now dead to Europe and alive for India. God Himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon!' I am so fully convinced of the will of God that methinks I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon without clothes and without a friend than not go there." Such a spirit was irresistible, and yet Conference might well hesitate. Financial burdens and responsibilities were multiplying upon them. Dr. Coke pleaded his cause with immense power, but the debate was adjourned and the decision was in doubt. That night Coke spent in prayer. Next morning he met Conference with a new offer. He would not only give himself to Ceylon, but he would give six thousand pounds to start the mission. Such absolute self-abandonment broke down all opposition and hesitation. Six missionaries were solemnly set aside for the new work, and on the last day but one of 1813 they sailed for Ceylon. In the mystery of Providence some men are led right up to the frontier of the Promised Land, and there bidden to lie down and die. So it was with Thomas Coke. In May the vessel was in the Indian Ocean, nearing the desired haven, but he who had been the soul of the expedition was found "lifeless on the floor of his cabin." His death was as a solemn seal upon the missionary crusade which he had led so long. There was no word now of retreat. A year or two later the Wesleyan Missionary Society took formal shape, and its first year's income exceeded twenty-thousand pounds.

Before that year was reached two other steps had been taken of inestimable influence on missionary work. The value of the Press had been recognised; and in 1799 the Religious Tract Society, and in 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society had been organised. The men who were most prominent at the foundation of the London Missionary Society were the principal supporters

of the new enterprises. These two famous societies were mainly due to the sagacity and enthusiasm of Mr. Joseph Hardcastle, the first treasurer of the London Missionary Society, in whose office at Old Swan Stairs the committees met which took the work in hand. It is probably true to say that no society has ever existed which has exerted so deep and far-reaching an influence on the thought and faith of mankind as the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The movement that we have just been chronicling stands for the influence of the Free Churches on the religious life of the world. It has been abundantly demonstrated that the Free Church spirit is essentially evangelistic and missionary. That the first Protestant missionary, John Eliot, should be a Free Churchman was a fact prophetic of much. The Free Churches were born of the passion for the Gospel of Christ in its purity and simplicity ; and their democratic sympathies sprang from the conviction of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood and Sovereignty of God. The birth of the missionary movement meant a return to the heroic age of the Church. Hitherto the Free Church martyrs had been men and women who suffered persecution and death at the hands of their fellow-Christians. The spirit which persecution could not break was now to show itself as unconquerable as ever in battle with heathen idolatry and cruelty. For the last hundred years the Free Church martyrs have borne their testimony abroad with the same noble fidelity that their fathers displayed at home. In the South Sea Islands, in India, in China, in Africa, hundreds of them have laid down their lives for the Gospel. The work of William Carey, Robert Morrison, John Williams, William Knibb, Robert Moffat, Alexander Duff, Alfred Saker, David Livingstone, Thomas Comber, John Calvert,

James Chalmers, and scores of others has revived the glories of the apostolic age. On every field they have communicated their spirit to their disciples. Native confessors have suffered and died with dauntless courage, fearing as little as the martyrs in the Coliseum to look death in the face for the love of Christ. Nor has it been only in such ordeals as these that the Free Church spirit has manifested itself. In hundreds of places, men and women have toiled on for years without a sign of progress, in unfaltering patience and fortitude, hoping, praying, working, watching, for the dawn. Such was the work of Henry Nott, in Tahiti, Moffat in Africa, Gilmour in Mongolia, Paton in the New Hebrides, and a multitude of others of less note but no less devotion. The Free Church spirit has won its battle in England; it has fashioned America; it has expressed itself in the religious life of our colonies; it is building up free Christian communities in all parts of the earth; and it is destined, unless all signs fail, to conquer the world.

CHAPTER XV.

Free Churches, Scotland.

The distinctive Free Church position was not adopted by any considerable section of the religious life of Scotland until a comparatively late period. As we have seen, Robert Browne prophesied in vain over what he declared to be the dry bones of the Church of Scotland. Neither did the nobler passion and eloquence of John Penry leave any Free Church conviction behind. Probably the constant menace of an aggressive and intolerant prelacy kept Presbytery united and strong; and the fierce ecclesiastical controversies in Scotland were as to whether Episcopacy or Presbyterianism should be the form of Church government established by law. Cromwell's enlightened theory of toleration was anathema to the uncompromising Covenanters who upheld uniformity in the North; and his famous plea, in which he besought them by the mercies of God to conceive it possible that they might be mistaken, fell upon deaf ears and obdurate hearts. The Scottish Free Churchman of to-day appeals with justice to John Knox's "First Book of Discipline," in which the full rights and privileges of the individual Christian congregation are uncompromisingly stated. That liberty of action in regard to the calling of a minister and the exercise of discipline are thereby conceded to the separate community seems undeniable. Knox defines the three main notes of a Church as: (1) the true preaching of the Word of God; (2) the right administration

of the Sacraments; (3) Ecclesiastical discipline rightly administered as God's Word prescribed. His declaration—"Wheresoever, then, these notes are seen and of any time continue (be the number never so few, above two or three), there without all doubt is the true Kirk of Christ, Who according to His promise is in the midst of them"—might have been made by Robert Browne or John Robinson. It is not too much to say that even when the yoke of patronage was heaviest, and the privileges and liberties of the Kirk furthest to seek, the legend of popular rights still lingered, and the best men and women lamented that the true heritage of the Church had been sold for a mess of pottage. In the heroic resistance of the Covenanters to the imposition of an alien Church polity there was manifest the spirit of which Free Churchmen are made. Brave, narrow, headstrong, noble, Richard Cameron died in heroic protest against the right of Charles II. to civil and ecclesiastical authority in Scotland. For years he had been a wandering prophet in his own land and in the Low Countries. In 1680 he preached overt rebellion. He failed, and paid the price of failure with his blood. He and his handful of devoted, if fanatical, followers were cut to pieces by the dragoons of Charles at Airsmoss in Auchinleck. His fiery, invincible soul went marching on in his disciples, who were known as Cameronians, and were distinguished for the tenacity with which they adhered to the letter of their covenanting convictions.

The more legitimate Free Church spirit, however, appeared first in an attack on those covenanting formulas which for so long had held theological thought in Scotland rigid, as in a vice. It was John Glas, the parish minister at the village of Tealing near Dundee, who in the first quarter of the eighteenth century challenged the covenanting policy in the interests of liberty of

thought and faith. He was a man of singular purity of life, and devotion to truth as he saw it; and the influence of his teaching and example gradually conquered the prejudices of many of his parishioners and produced a very gracious and genuine revival of religious life in his parish. The comparative obscurity of his charge protected him for some time from any public accusation, but at last his views alarmed his brethren in the neighbouring town of Dundee. A parish minister who held and taught that a National Church had no warrant in Scripture, and the magistrate no authority in matters spiritual, was certainly an anomaly. But it is possible that these views might have been regarded as harmless if John Glas would have held his peace on the subject of the Covenant. He, on the contrary, persisted in his contention that the imposition of a creed upon all the people, subjecting dissentients to serious obloquy and disability, was un-Christian. The proceedings against him were very prolonged, extending over several years. His congregation supported him with the utmost devotion, but in the issue he was deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1730. Henceforth he presided over an Independent Community, first in Tealing, and then in Dundee; and when, nine years later, as a tribute to his Christian character and service, the sentence of deposition was rescinded, he had become too settled in Congregational convictions to return to the mother Church. The protest for liberty which he represented had meanwhile borne fruit in the establishment of quite a number of churches on similar lines to the one at Dundee. Unfortunately, the protest was largely neutralised by a curious slavish literalism in the interpretation of the New Testament by John Glas and his followers. This, and the lack of evangelistic and missionary fervour, had a sterilising effect

upon the "Glasite" churches, as they were called; and possibly the most notable memory in connection with the movement is that in the little London community Michael Faraday was a prominent worshipper and worker, finding spiritual recreation and refreshment there in the intervals of brilliant scientific investigations and demonstrations. It is recorded on the grave of John Glas in Dundee that he was "minister of the Congregational Church in this place"; and that his "character in the Churches of Christ is well known and will outlive all monumental inscriptions."

This assertion of liberty to depart from covenanting standards was a contribution to the cause of theological freedom; and Robert Sandeman, who married the daughter of John Glas, and became an elder in the church at Perth, developed views which were the subject of much fierce disputation, more especially in England. The Sandemanians were principally identified with Robert Sandeman's view of the Atonement, which, as stated on his tombstone in America, was that "the bare death of Jesus Christ, without a thought or deed on the part of man, is sufficient to present the chief of sinners spotless before God." The Glasite and Sandemanian communities are now practically extinct, and the movement is only interesting as an indication of an awakening spirit of independence, which was about to manifest itself in far more formidable fashion.

The great Free Church movements in Scotland were all concerned with the protest against patronage, and on behalf of the right and privilege of the Christian congregation to call the man of its choice to be its minister. This privilege, it was maintained with much reason, was a foundation principle in the Church of Scotland, though it had often been abrogated. Needless to say, the privilege had been lost sight of when the Scottish

Church lay beneath the dominion of a usurping prelacy, but soon after the Revolution it had been reaffirmed that while the "heritors" might nominate to a charge, the final decision rested with the congregation. If the Church of Scotland had been of pure Presbyterian strain, all would now have been well. But its ministry contained a large admixture of Episcopalians, who had been allowed to retain their livings on very easy terms when Presbytery was re-established after the Revolution. These men disliked intensely the popular power, preferring to owe their own position to the arbitrary appointment of a patron rather than to the goodwill of the congregation. This evil leaven of aristocracy and prelacy exerted a far-reaching influence in the Church, in consequence of which, when Queen Anne brought in the days of reaction, the privilege of the congregation was once more destroyed and patronage re-established in Scotland. This was bad enough, but every revival of Erastianism means the decay of spiritual religion. It was so now. The Church of Scotland was given over to a soulless moderatism. A Church that could hand over its most sacred prerogative to men whose doubtful qualifications lay in the possession of so many acres of land was a Church whose hold on the central verities of Christianity was uncertain. That spirit was abroad in her borders which makes belief unfashionable and enthusiasm an offence. That this was so became very manifest during what was known as the "Marrow" controversy. An English Puritan book, entitled "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," was republished in the year 1718. The man who was mainly responsible for its publication was the man who, had he lived, would have been, we cannot doubt, the father of the Secession Church. This was Thomas Boston, whose "Fourfold State" found its way into almost every peasant home

in Scotland, and whose "Crook in the Lot" has attained the distinction of a sacred classic. Boston was of the fibre of the Covenanters. His father had suffered much for Covenanting zeal, and Thomas Boston, as a boy, had shared his father's hardships, and embraced his spirit. He grew up in passionate attachment to the freedom and privilege of the Church. He refused to owe anything to patrons, and in consequence fulfilled his ministry in very lowly places. But his writings, together with his remarkable personality, won for him immense influence among the people. He had published the "Marrow" as expressing the evangelical interpretation of Christianity; and as such it was regarded by the moderate majority of the Assembly. In 1720 the Assembly solemnly warned the country against the book, and insisted that all ministers should preach against it. The effect of this resolution was to call to the front certain representative leaders of the evangelical party, and at the next Assembly Thomas Boston, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, and nine other ministers entered a plea on behalf of the book, and were "admonished and rebuked" by their brethren.

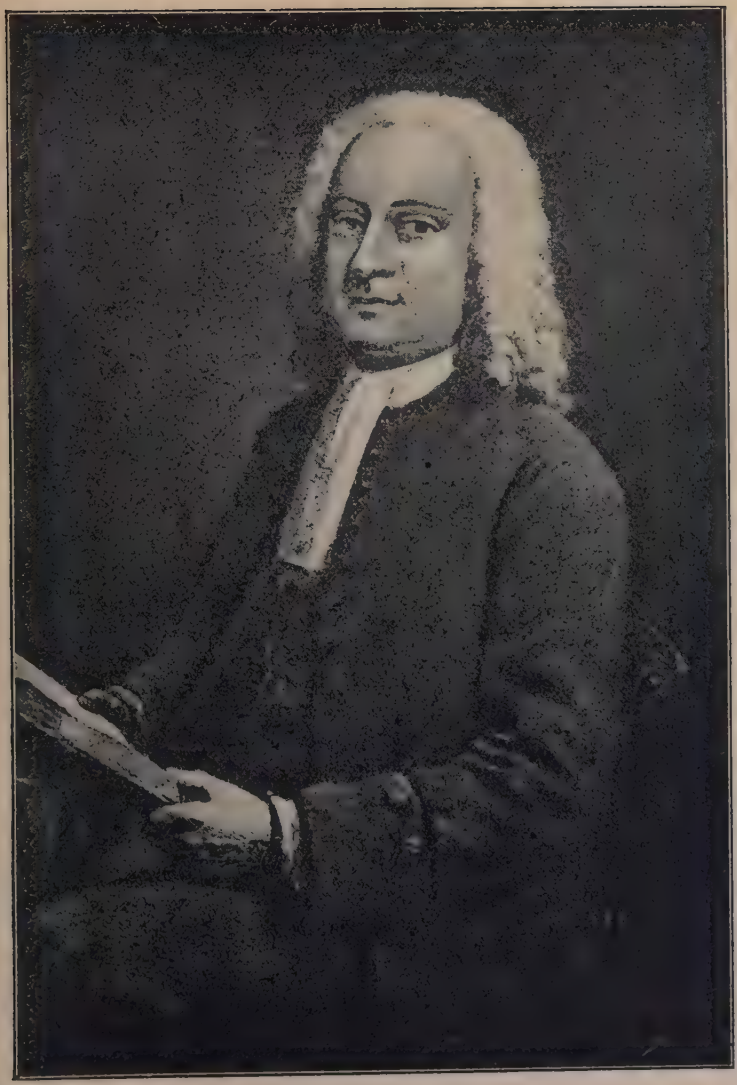
The men thus censured were by no means dismayed. They might be weak in the Assembly, but they stood for what was deepest in the life and strongest in the faith of the Scottish people, and they knew it. If the congregations had been allowed to call their own ministers there would have been less lukewarmness and semi-rationalism in the Assembly. The spirit which Boston and the Erskines manifested in the Assembly awakened response in the country. Congregations began to claim their ancient privileges, and to discover that their liberties had been stolen while they slept. The rights of the people were asserted over against the so-called rights of patrons. When ministers were

installed in parish livings contrary to the wishes of the parishioners, they had sometimes to be defended by a company of dragoons. But every such victory of the State over the Church was in reality a new argument for the advocates of freedom. It was seen to be a monstrous thing that the election of a minister in the Church of Christ should have to be supported by pikes and muskets. Sometimes the local presbytery refused to take part in the induction of a patron's nominee against the will of the people; then the less scrupulous Assembly sent down members of its own, who came to be known as a "riding committee," to carry through the distasteful proceedings.

It was high time that Scotland should find some Luther to protest against the secularisation of the Church under this system of patronage. Ebenezer Erskine was the man for the hour. By virtue alike of his ancestry and his convictions he was admirably qualified for the part he was about to play. It is a fact of great interest, as linking the Free Church movement in Scotland to the elder Nonconformity, that Ebenezer Erskine was the son of an ejected minister. His father, Henry Erskine, had been among the two thousand who gave up their livings on Bartholomew's Day, in 1662. He was at this time parish minister at Cornhill, Norham, Northumberland. After his ejection he pursued his ministry in Scotland with such secrecy as was needful, but in 1679 he was charged with preaching at conventicles, and having answered boldly, "I have my commission from Christ, and though I were within an hour of my death I durst not lay it down at the feet of any mortal man," he was sent to prison, and afterwards banished from Scotland. How he lived during the next seven or eight years is difficult to realise. He is said to have had altogether thirty-three

children, and some of the stories of his privations are at once pathetic and heroic. Perhaps Henry Erskine's most fruitful work was the conversion of Thomas Boston, whose influence in his generation was second to that of no spiritual teacher in Scotland.

The heir of such a legacy of moral constancy and spiritual power, Ebenezer Erskine proved himself abundantly worthy of the privilege. Born in 1680, and educated at Edinburgh University, he became subsequently chaplain and tutor in the family of the Earl of Rothes, and afterwards parish minister of Portmoak in Fifeshire. Early in his ministry there he passed through a spiritual crisis which deepened his religious convictions, and intensified his earnestness. As Christ became more central to his own thoughts, the authority of Christ became to him more absolute in the government of the Church. We have seen how he identified himself with Thomas Boston's protest in the "Marrow" controversy. But the occasion was at hand which would make even more severe trial of his manhood. In 1731 he had been promoted from Portmoak to Stirling; and in 1732, as moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, he delivered the famous sermon which forced to an issue the great controversy concerning patronage. The text of his sermon was, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the headstone of the corner." In the course of his sermon he maintained that if a man would be a true builder in the Church of Christ he must have a twofold call, the call of God and of the Church. "The call of the Church lies in the free choice and election of the Christian people." The "family" of God is "the freest society in the world." Was it likely that God would set over it patrons, heritors—those whose spiritual qualification was that they possessed a certain quantity of land? By the Act of the Assembly, confining power



EBENEZER ERSKINE.

of election to heritors and elders, "a new wound is given to the prerogative of Christ and the privilege of His subjects." Finally there is this great declaration: "Whatever Church authority may be in that Act, yet it wants the authority of the Son of God." The Assembly was rejecting the Corner-stone—"He is rejected in His poor members and the rich of this world put in His room."

The courage of this sermon was as conspicuous as its truth. By all accounts, there was a nobility and dignity about Ebenezer Erskine that lent influence and authority to his message. His portraits acquaint us with a singularly impressive and interesting face, and we know that his figure was imposing, and his demeanour fearless if somewhat austere. He must have known what reception awaited his sermon. The Synod promptly condemned it and demanded Erskine's submission. He appealed to the General Assembly, and was supported in his protest by Alexander Moncrieff, of Abernethy, William Wilson, of Perth, James Fisher, of Kinclaven, and ten other ministers. When the appeal was heard in 1733, only the above-named ministers appeared. The Assembly was overwhelmingly on the side of the Synod, and against Erskine. They refused to listen to the reading of his declaration, whereupon he laid it on the table, and with the three ministers who supported him, withdrew from the Assembly. When they had left, a member of the Assembly picked up the declaration, and, it is said, read it in a bitter and mocking tone. Great exasperation was produced; and a motion commanding the four protesters to appear immediately and answer for their conduct was carried without dissent. A committee was appointed to confer with them, and when it had reported adversely, it was intimated to them that they would be allowed till August to repent and to retract their opinions. If they refused they would be

suspended from their ministry, and if they persisted they would render themselves liable to the severer penalty. The threat had no effect upon men whose attitude throughout had been due to deliberate conviction, and in November, 1733, the four ministers were formally cast out of the Church, and their charges declared to be vacant. On the 5th of December, 1733, they met at Gairney Bridge, near Kinross, and constituted the first Associate Presbytery.

It was soon realised by the General Assembly that their zeal had outrun their discretion. Testimonies as to the worth and excellence of the ejected ministers poured in upon them. The Presbytery and the magistrates of Stirling testified with enthusiasm to the rare qualities of Erskine. The Presbytery declared that even the authority of an Assembly condemning him could not injure his character, and that in this case the condemnation had only heightened it. The Assembly began to entertain thoughts of reconciliation. The seceders should be restored to their charges, and nothing be said about the past. But this sprinkling of rose-water over a gangrened wound was mere trifling to the protesters. They had testified on behalf of a cause. So long as the liberties and privileges of the Church of Christ were denied they could not consent to return to the State Church. From all parts of Scotland came encouraging reports, and in 1737 four other ministers, including Ralph Erskine, the younger brother of Ebenezer Erskine, joined the Associate Presbytery. Meanwhile Mr. Wilson had been set apart as a professor for training young men for the ministry. So resolutely and systematically had the organisation of the new Free Church begun.

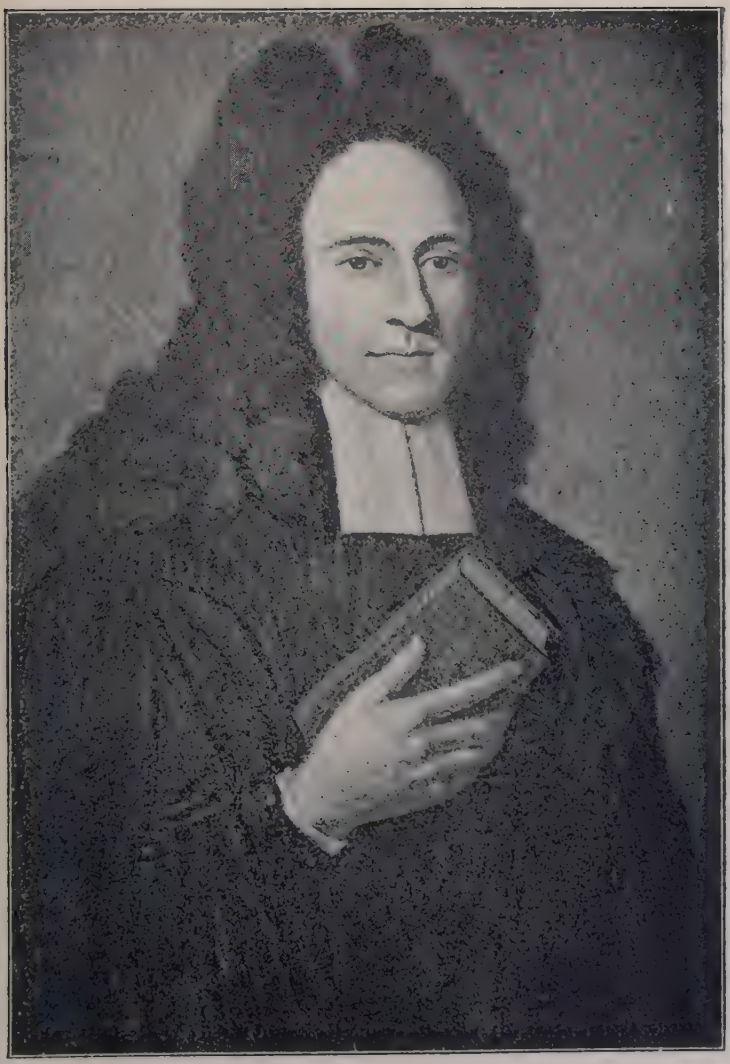
Of all the fathers of the Secession none was more notable than Ralph Erskine. His quaint and sometimes brilliant imagination was combined with intellectual

strength and a heart of reál charity and catholicity. In his declaration of the reasons for separation he recognises the "bad tendency" of division, and records his resolution "to shun divisive principles and practices." "The safest way," he proceeds, "for preserving peace being to cleave to Jesus Christ, who is the centre of all true and holy union, and to advance the truth as it is in Him, I therefore think myself obliged . . . to take the present opportunity of joining in what I reckon a faithful testimony." This is the man to whom Whitefield acknowledged his indebtedness, and of whom Andrew Fuller declared that his words had "awakened him to conviction and melted him to tears." He was known throughout Scotland by his little volume of "Gospel Sonnets," a quaint collection of sacred verse, with conceits as curious as Quarles's "Emblems," if with less of metrical merit.

Let it not for a moment be supposed that these pioneers of ecclesiastical freedom in Scotland were emancipated from all the unworthy prejudices of their time. It is possible to convict them of a lack of political sagacity on the ground of their dissent from the Act of Union of Scotland and England. Like John Wesley, and like the New England Puritans, they were careful to set on record their belief in witchcraft, and objection to the repeal of the cruel laws against it. They expressed an enthusiasm for the Covenants, which betrays the fact that they had not grasped how serious an infringement of religious liberty and discouragement of theological progress the Covenants had been. But in regard to their central protest on behalf of the prerogative of the Church of Christ they have been abundantly justified. Very solemn and very stirring were the scenes in their various parishes when the doors of the churches where they had so often ministered were closed against them.

In the shadow of the castle walls at Stirling, Ebenezer Erskine addressed a great multitude in the open air. Lifting up the pulpit Bible, he declared upon the sacred truth of it, that not he but those who had driven him forth were responsible for the scenes of that day. Mr. Moncrieff, of Abernethy, preached to his people all the winter through in the open air regardless of wind and snow. To secure themselves against Mr. Nairn, of Abbotshall, the heritors, "*at their own hands*," we are told, "locked the church and churchyard doors and nailed iron plates on the keyholes of the said doors." The proceeding was sufficiently significant as to which side the popular sympathy upheld. At Perth, Mr. Wilson was excluded from the church, and a riot was only prevented by his own appeal to the people. "No violence," he said, "the Master whom I serve is the Prince of Peace." Accommodated in "the Glovers' Yard," he preached there to an immense concourse of people from the words, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

As the Secession fathers in their battle with Erastianism relied upon the more spiritual conception of Christianity and the Church, their thoughts naturally turned to the great Methodist evangelists for help, and especially to Whitefield. In so doing they mistook their man. It was a principle with Whitefield to advocate no one order of Church government as being better than any other. He was willing to preach the Gospel, he said, to all that were willing to hear him, of whatever denomination. He was "quite neuter as to Church government." "If the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein." In taking such a catholic position Whitefield was commending himself to all who are not the victims of ecclesiasticism. But at the same



RALPH ERSKINE

time it must be admitted he had the defects of his qualities. He was quite unable to appreciate the value of the principle for which the Associate Presbytery were testifying and suffering. The result was a very unedifying quarrel. Whitefield's prophetic gift was so far at fault that it led him to a prediction that the Secession was a tower of Babel destined to fall upon its builders. On the other hand, the seceders turned upon the evangelist with unmerited abuse; and a "declaration" was issued against him on behalf of the "suffering remnant of the anti-Popish, anti-Lutheran, anti-Prelatic, anti-Whitefieldian, anti-Erastian, anti-Sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Scotland."

For a time it seemed as if Whitefield's prediction might be fulfilled. The year 1747 went far to justify his reference to the Tower of Babel, for division and confusion of tongues did lamentably prevail. The matter in dispute was as to the legitimacy of taking the Burgesses' oath which was required of the citizens of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth. The words of this oath were as follows: "Here I protest before God that I profess and allow with all my heart the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof." The question between the two parties was not the nobler one as to the wrong done to religious liberty in requiring such an oath at all as a qualification for civic privilege; the question simply was whether any man ought to take this oath who disallowed the methods and practices of the Established Church. The Erskines took the view that the oath was permissible to a seceder inasmuch as he only pledged himself to "the true religion." The narrower and more vehement party not only disallowed the oath, but refused to remain in communion with those who did not take the same view. The leader of these irreconcilables

was a man of extraordinary force of character, whose masterful will and intolerant temper were nevertheless not inconsistent with many very noble qualities. This was the Rev. Adam Gib, minister of Bristo Church, near Edinburgh. Adam Gib was ordained as a Secession minister in 1741 in the open air. "I was so glad," said an aged matron, "when the ministers laid their hands upon his bonnie head and screened it from the falling snow." In the following year the Bristo Church was built. The young minister was foremost among the revilers of Whitefield, for which in later life he expressed his sorrow. He had come to the ministry, however, in the intensest Covenanting spirit; for he opened a vein in his arm and wrote out the Covenant in his own blood. Such a man was, as may be supposed, by no means out of his element when the appearance of the Pretender in '45 involved Scotland in civil war. It is deserving of record that the Secessionists everywhere were found on the side of the House of Hanover. The cause of Stuart had no attractions for them. When Edinburgh was occupied by the rebels, Adam Gib withdrew his congregation from the city, "as from the seat of robbers," to quote his own words, and led them in worship at Dreghorn, near Collington, "where the rebels kept a principal guard." There for five successive Sabbaths he prayed and preached within the hearing of many of the Pretender's guard, denouncing the rising as an "anti-Christian rebellion headed by a Popish Pretender." Subsequently Adam Gib and a troop of men raised from his congregation and trained by himself helped to defend Edinburgh against the rebels, and were present at the field of Falkirk. It was easier, however, to turn his "session" into Hanoverian troopers than into anti-Burghers. When the question of the legitimacy of the Burgesses' oath was raised, Adam Gib was the most

vehement of the opponents of the oath, and may be said to have become the leader of what came to be known as the anti-Burgher party. He did not succeed, however, in carrying with him the majority of his session. They were as obstinate in their judgment as he in his. Interminable litigation followed, the great question in dispute being the possession of the Church buildings and property. Adam Gib's study of military strategy stood him in good stead. He had nine-tenths of the law on his side, for he was in possession, securely entrenched in Bristo Church premises, and it took years of campaigning on the part of his opponents to manœuvre him out of his entrenchment. The Burgher party, however, eventually triumphed, and Adam Gib built an anti-Burgher meeting-house for his faithful remnant elsewhere.

The same strength of character and conviction that had once upheld the Covenants manifested itself in Burgher and Anti-Burgher secessionists. Secession Churches were sometimes formed in the early days out of what were known as "praying societies," which answered within the Church of Scotland to the Methodist societies within the Church of England. Men and women whose spiritual life was unsatisfied by the prevailing moderatism grouped themselves for prayer and conference. Such groups of devout and earnest spirits were very commonly in sympathy with the Erskines. We find that out of a union of a few such societies at Craigmailen the first Secession Church south of the Forth was formed. From far and near the worshippers gathered to the rude conventicle that housed for many years this notable congregation. Some of the members travelled twenty miles to unite themselves in worship with those who were upholding the prerogative of the Church of Christ. Before the Meeting House was built, the congre-

gation gathered on the open brae, and the legend still lingers how when the snow fell in winter the men used "to take off their large and roomy Kilmarnock bonnets, and put their feet into them for warmth, at the same time drawing their shepherd-checked plaids over their heads." The women, too, carried their babies many miles rather than be detained at home; and we are told that they walked barefoot and only sat down to put on shoes and stockings when they came within sight of the place of meeting. Some of those who were present had risen at four o'clock in the morning, and travelled on foot through dark and dusk into the broad daylight. If it was the Communion Season the gatherings were exceptionally large and solemn. The late Dr. Waugh is reported to have said, "an angel might have lingered on his errand of mercy to hear the Gospel preached on Stitchel Brae." In such scenes of quiet fortitude and religious fervour the Free Church of Scotland began. An "etching" of inestimable value we owe to the genius of Thomas Carlyle who learned "his first Latin" from John Johnstone, Burgher minister at Ecclefechan. More than his "first Latin," too, Carlyle learned in the "little heath-thatched house" where the meeting was held, and where "the peasant union" and their "simple Evangelist," "constituted properly the Church of the district; they were the blessing and the saving of many; on me, too, their pious, heaven-sent influences still rest and live." And again, "Very venerable are those old Seceder clergy to me when I look back. Most figures of them in my time were hoary old men; men so like Evangelists in modern vesture and 'poor scholars and gentlemen of Christ,' I have nowhere met with among Protestant or Papal clergy in any country in the world. . . . That poor temple of my childhood is more sacred to me than the biggest cathedral then extant

could have been; rude, rustic, bare, no temple in the world was more so; but there were sacred lambencies, tongues of authentic flame which kindled what was best in me, what has not yet gone out."

Thus did the foremost literary figure of the nineteenth century confess his personal debt to the Seceder ministry, and to the Burgher community which met in the "heath-thatched house" at Ecclefechan.

Such a spirit made for progress even through days of disunion. At first division tended to beget division. The Burgher wing of the Secessionists had its split and the Anti-Burgher wing had its split. Whitefield's ominous prediction still tended to fulfil itself. Yet these new divisions were due to the spirit of progress. It was inevitable that a Church pledged to freedom should define its position in regard to State interference and the power of the civil magistrate. With every year the Seceders had taken a firmer grip of their own principles, and faced the logical consequences of their position. They had come to see that it could not be in harmony with their protest that the Covenants should be imposed upon the people by the Civil Power. To this heresy to religious freedom a few unprogressive spirits still clung. These were they who in 1805 formed the "Original Associate Synod," commonly known as the Old Lights. They came out from the Burghers; while some four congregations separated from the Anti-Burghers on a similar issue. One cannot possibly regret that at a cost so small the Seceders should have purified themselves from the old leaven of Erastian intolerance. They were now on the way to re-union among themselves. Seventy-three years had passed since the first breach; the Burgher's Oath had gone the way of all such foolish disabilities, and in 1820, in the Bristo Church, the Burgher and Anti-

Burgher Synods joined forces. The newly-formed, united Associate Synod comprised 262 congregations.

We must now ask our readers to go back to a period twenty years later than the origin of the Secession Church—the year 1761, and the years immediately preceding it. In these years there sprang into existence another Free Church which was eventually to amalgamate with the Associate Synod, and become the United Presbyterian Church. Once more, the direct cause of the Secession was the usurpation by the State of the rights of the Church by a further attempt to supersede popular privileges by private patronage.

There had been some effort made to conciliate those who looked with anxiety and dread on the loss of the Church's privileges, by an Act of Assembly "against the intrusion of ministers into vacant congregations." This Act retained many in the Establishment who without it would have followed the Erskines into separation. But when the effect of the Secession agitation ceased to be felt, it soon became apparent that this Act would be a dead letter. The Presbyteries, however, preserved a certain show of dignity and authority. If strenuous objection was offered by any parish to the election of a certain minister by a patron, the Presbytery might refuse to take part in his ordination or induction. Then nothing could be done unless the General Assembly would send down a special committee to instal the presentee by force of arms. In this way members of the local Presbytery felt that they washed their hands of all responsibility for such a scandal. It will be apparent, however, that every triumph of patronage meant another minister whose personal interest it was to uphold the system; and in the course of years patronage strengthened its hold upon the Scottish Church. Then came a decision in the Courts that if a Presbytery refused to

proceed to induct a patron's presentee the value of the living might be retained by the patron. Here was a whip wherewith to chastise reluctant Presbyteries. It was further represented that the action of the Presbyteries alienated financial help from the Church, so that ministerial stipends suffered. It was determined therefore to proceed to tune the Presbyteries ; and measures were concerted for coercing the Presbyteries into performing the obnoxious duty required of them. Indifferent to the rights of the Church and careful only of the so-called rights of the patrons, the authorities of the Church of Scotland took action that was certain to provoke Secession. The Presbytery to bear the burden of protest was the Dunfermline Presbytery. In 1749 the patron of Inverkeithing parish presented the living to a man whom the parishioners refused to accept. So strong was the feeling that the Dunfermline Presbytery declined to induct in the face of so much conscientious opposition. A way out of the difficulty might have been found had the General Assembly been in a conciliatory mood. But it was felt to be an appropriate opportunity to make an example. The Dunfermline Presbytery was commanded to proceed to the induction ; and it was decided that not fewer than five ministers should constitute a quorum. The regular quorum being three, this was a manifest bit of high-handedness to force on a crisis. The five were not forthcoming ; in consequence of which all the six absentees were summoned to the bar of the Assembly, and it was arbitrarily decided that one of the six should be deposed from the ministry. An example must be made. The choice fell upon the man who perhaps in all the Church of Scotland at the time was best fitted to play the part assigned to him,—Thomas Gillespie, of Carnock.

Ebenezer Erskine's relation to the elder Nonconformity

was, as we have seen, that he was the son of an ejected minister. Thomas Gillespie's was even more intimate. He had studied in the Northampton Academy under Philip Doddridge. He had been ordained by a number of Independent divines. He had imbibed the Free Church spirit south of the border. Returning to his native land, his orders had been acknowledged, and he had accepted a call to Carnock, near Dunfermline. It should be added, as relating him to the Secession, that his awakening to the spiritual life had been due to Thomas Boston, and that his mother had followed the Erskines into the Secession. When he signed the Confession as a Church of Scotland minister, he did it with "an explanation respecting the power of the civil magistrate in religion." Thus much he probably felt he owed to Doddridge and the Independents. With such convictions he was not the man to lend his sanction to the settlement of a pastor over his flock by means of a troop of dragoons.

Gillespie was a man of very gentle and even timid spirit. He was a minister of refined sensibility, somewhat introspective in habit, but full of spiritual intensity. He had no heart for ecclesiastical contentions, being wholly given up to the pastoral charge of his own parish. He was "no man of affairs, nor inclined to strife"; but "marked by much simplicity, and guileless even as a child." When sentence of deposition was passed on him he behaved with admirable quiet dignity, declaring that he heard it "with real concern and awful impressions of the Divine conduct in it"; "but," he continued, "I rejoice that to me it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." "I wish Mr. Gillespie joy," exclaimed Whitefield, when he heard the news. "The Pope has turned *Presbyterian*. How blind is Satan! What

does he get by casting out Christ's servants ? I expect great good will come out of these confusions. Mr. Gillespie will do more good in one week now than before in a year." Gillespie attended the meeting of the Presbytery, when he was formally dismissed from membership, and then left the Church of Scotland to work under other and freer auspices. "Make way there for the man with the strait-laced conscience!" cried one of his opponents, as Gillespie left the building. It had been well for the Church of Scotland if there had been a few more like-minded men within her borders to create a soul under the ribs of death. She was casting out one of her noblest sons. She had, in Gillespie's own language, imposed upon him "a sinful term of communion," and he had refused a fellowship so dearly purchased. "The man with the strait-laced conscience" withdrew, and it was evident that the Church of Scotland must fill her pulpits henceforth with men who had less conscience than he.

Gillespie took up his old pastoral work quietly and unostentatiously, preaching at Dunfermline in a barn fitted up as a meeting-house. All his old session, with but one exception, clave to him. He was henceforth in great request, and had to preach through all the countryside and officiate at Communion services in the open air wherever crowds of sympathisers could conveniently meet. But for the present no attempt to organise a new denomination was made. The ambition to be a leader in a new ecclesiastical movement was far from Gillespie's spirit ; and the zeal of the Secessionists for the Covenants made communion with them difficult. He for his part had taken the catholic position that he would hold communion with any who were true to "the Head."

Five or six years passed, and then a remarkable

union was accomplished. Thomas Boston, the notable son of a notable father, laid down his office in the Church of Scotland, feeling that she had lost her soul and sold her birthright. In his case there was no question of being cast out. He went out against the urgent entreaty of his Presbytery because he could no longer conscientiously stay within. His was a voluntary protest against a state of things he could no longer endure and felt himself powerless to alter. Boston was one of the most eloquent preachers in Scotland, and his people at Jedburgh were enthusiastically with him. They raised a new meeting-house for him to preach in, and the magistrates and council and almost the entire population were present at the opening services. The General Assembly replied to his resignation by a formal excommunication, and Boston was henceforth united by their action as well as by his own to the glorious company of the Nonconformists. A graphic description has come down to us of one of his earliest Communion services. It was held in the open air at "a little holm called the Ana, on the banks of the Jed." At the base of a high precipitous brae a pulpit was erected, and by the banks of the smiling river the Communion tables stretched in two long rows, "covered with linen white as snow." Thousands were present in that peaceful valley, and took "the new covenant in My Blood," devoting themselves to the freedom and prerogative of the Church of Christ. It was at one of these solemn services that Gillespie first joined Boston in Christian worship, and three years later they constituted themselves a presbytery, under the beautiful and significant name, the *Relief* Presbytery. The idea was, of course, that those who felt the burden of the State Church's apostasy from its ancient principles, or who desired to be free from the tyranny of the Covenants, might find *relief* in this

new fellowship. With Boston and Gillespie in the Relief Presbytery was associated a Mr. Colier, who had come from an English Dissenting Church to take a pastorate at Colingsburgh. This was in October, 1761.

That such a Presbytery was needed was evident from the instant response to its principles that was awakened. Many Established Church ministers came out and joined themselves to the Relief Presbytery. So many were the congregations pleading for inclusion, and for ministerial services, that the founders were embarrassed, not knowing where to turn for the help they needed. Steadily, however, the movement spread; and even the inevitable period of controversy when "Relief" principles had to be agreed upon and published to the world did little to retard the advance. One Relief Presbytery testified against "the duty of national covenanting"; had the courage to indicate errors in the Westminster Assembly's Creed and Catechism; and disowned absolutely the right of the civil power to interfere in regard to spiritual affairs. It has been said that two mistakes alone prevented the spread of their cause far and wide. They trained no young men for their ministry, and they were not aggressive and missionary, establishing a cause nowhere unless they were first of all urgently invited by the people of the district. Yet their growth was constant, and when in 1821 its synod declared for union with the elder Secession body, the United Associate Synod, the Relief Presbytery was in a position to bring a strong and compact fellowship of churches into such a union. The proposal was at that time premature. Twenty-six years elapsed before the predicted amalgamation was accomplished. Then in 1847 in Edinburgh, in the presence of three thousand spectators, the two synods joined hands. "The four Secession Fathers brought four hundred

congregations into this union, and the Relief Presbytery of three brought one hundred and eighteen congregations. These made the United Presbyterian Church with a membership of one hundred and forty thousand." The separate streams had swelled into rivers, and now in one united channel presented to the world an impressive volume of religious life and power. A few years were to pass before another Free Church river would begin to flow through the land, and in due course an even mightier confluence would result in one great Free Church of Scotland.

While the events we have been recording were taking place, another religious movement had been in progress in Scotland which was to have important results. It was characteristically a laymen's movement. The leaders of this new Evangelism had received no human ordination, but their message was in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. It was natural that a work that was in its origin so unclerical, and in the technical sense unministerial, should tend to express itself in the simplest democratic forms; and modern Scottish Congregationalism acknowledges as its founders, under God, the brothers Haldane, and certain co-workers with them in their mission to those whom the Presbyterian Churches had failed to influence. One reads to-day with quiet enjoyment the somewhat ponderous "pastoral admonition addressed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, May 23, 1799, to all people under their charge." The worthy authors of this document point their moral from the French Revolution; and warn their flocks against the divisive methods of "those who assuming the name of missionaries from what they call the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at home, as if they had some special commission from heaven, are at present going through the land, &c."—a sentence of

sixteen lines long being required to set forth all their enormities. The General Assembly credits itself with the desire to "judge charitably of all men." But "much reason there is to suspect . . . that the name of liberty is abused by them . . . to cover a secret democracy and anarchy." Therefore the document concludes, "in these giddy times, when the love of innovation so much prevails," it is necessary to "ask for the old paths." Such spirit of pious conservatism, with its dread of "secret democracy," "innovation" and so forth, is familiar enough in the history of Christendom, though not easily reconcilable with the example of the young Revolutionist of Nazareth, whose mission was to prove that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. We are compelled to ask who the offenders were who had drawn upon themselves and their converts this severe reproof; and was it possible that, the General Assembly notwithstanding, they actually had "some special commission from heaven"?

Even amid the multitude of examples of generous devotion to the welfare of the Christian Commonwealth, the extraordinary self-denial of the Haldanes approximates to the heroic. Robert Haldane, a retired captain of the Royal Navy, had a considerable landed estate near Stirling. In after years he was wont to attribute his religious awakening to certain conversations held with a journeyman mason. It is almost singular how little any influence of the regular "ministry" appears in this movement. His brother, James Alexander Haldane, had been also engaged in the naval service, and it was on board his ship the *Melville Castle* that the private reading of the Bible led to strong conviction as to his Christian faith and duty. John Aikman was a prosperous Jamaica merchant, who joined the Haldanes in their mission to the more neglected parts of

Scotland. George Cowie represented the ministerial supporters of the movement. He had resigned his position in the Established Church because of his hatred of subscription to theological dogmas, and also because he was attracted by a simpler order of Church life and government. He became tutor in Edinburgh to classes of young men who were to be trained for an Evangelistic ministry. William Innes, another Established Church clergyman, and brother-in-law of the Haldanes, also identified himself with their enterprise, undertook tutorial work and eventually became a Baptist minister in Edinburgh.

It was the original intention of the Haldanes to sell their estates and devote the whole proceeds to missionary work abroad, giving themselves as well as their property to the work of regenerating India. The invincible antagonism of the British authorities destroyed their hopes and diverted their energies into a new channel. They could not but observe that in their own land there were many thousands of people to whom the old dogmas made no appeal, and who needed a fresh, live statement of the Christian Gospel. So, while cultivating and cherishing the missionary spirit largely by means of the very successful "Missionary Magazine," they began to plan and conduct a campaign of lay-preaching. The idea of laymen expounding the Scriptures was a novel one in Scotland; and the simplicity of their speech and its freedom from conventionalism won an instant response. Needless to say, their proceedings were illegitimate and disorderly in the eyes of those who believe that grace is wedded to prescribed forms. Experience, however, scatters many illusions. The Scottish Church derided the Episcopal figment of apostolical succession; but themselves had a rigid doctrine of the ministry almost or quite as narrow and unscriptural. That a broader and nobler doctrine

is to-day so generally held is very largely the work of the Haldanes. The Haldanes, and Mr. Aikman, perambulated large parts of Scotland, and were everywhere received with the utmost eagerness. They preached, as the Wesleys and Whitefield had done in the south, on any convenient spot. They wore the ordinary attire of country gentlemen. Mr. Haldane, we are told, had "a blue coat, with front facings, and a powdered wig." Yet, heretical as their costume was, and irregular as their proceedings were conceived to be, they taught with authority and demonstrated their right to be regarded as heralds of the mercy of God. Leading Independents came up from England to help them. Rowland Hill preached for weeks together in Edinburgh to vast concourses of people. James Haldane organised and undertook the supervision of a Congregational Church in Edinburgh, and was ordained to this special work. "Tabernacles" were built for the work in Scotland as they had been built for Whitefield in England. Yet it was fully within the scheme of the Haldanes that those who were awakened might continue in their allegiance to their own Churches and become Evangelists of the new spirit therein.

Notwithstanding this catholic intention, the "missionaries" were subject to not a little persecution and a vast deal of odium and misrepresentation. The General Assembly's "admonition" gave the necessary sanction to popular hostility. The Assembly went even further, and passed an Act forbidding the use of its pulpits to men who "were not licensed," and also to preachers from England "who had not been first educated and licensed in Scotland." Two declaratory Acts against "vagrant teachers" and "unauthorised teachers of Sabbath-schools" also stained its records. These Acts, Dr. Guthrie afterwards declared, were among the

blackest the Church of Scotland had ever passed, and were intended, not to exclude heresy, but truth, from her pulpits. It should be said that in 1842 the Act against "vagrant teachers" and "unauthorised teachers of Sabbath-schools" was rescinded by a unanimous vote. But for a while petty acts of persecution were rife. Some of the preachers were haled before sheriffs; many teachers were interdicted by Presbyteries; the instrument of social ostracism was freely used; and a Mr. McArthur was seized in the act of conducting public worship and carried on to a ship of the Navy to be pressed for service. Here, however, the opposition had transgressed all constitutional boundaries, and Mr. McArthur eventually recovered substantial damages. Another method of persecution was to declare the baptisms performed by the evangelists irregular, and even to refuse a place in the parish burial-ground for any who died in communion with the new societies. The Free Churches joined with the Established Church in warning their adherents against this manifestation of a revived spiritual life. Ecclesiasticism of every order was concerned to maintain that the least qualified licentiate was a truer minister of Christ than James or Robert Haldane through whom thousands had received a new joy and stepped out into the higher manhood.

Unfortunately for the consolidation of Congregationalism in Scotland, the originators of the movement developed views which produced serious divisions. The Haldanes embraced Baptist convictions, with views as to the conduct of worship scarcely distinguishable from those held by the Plymouth Brethren in England. There was a time of much distress and keen controversy. The evangelistic work was greatly hindered; and only the wisdom of certain leaders who gave themselves to the task of building up a union of Congrega-

tional churches and strengthening the denominational colleges for the adequate training of pastors and evangelists saved the situation. It would be impossible to exaggerate the debt which Scottish Congregationalism owes to men like Greville Ewing and Dr. Ralph Wardlaw, who raised the standard of thought in the churches, while holding the denomination true to its evangelistic traditions.

It was a sign of the times that some men had begun to leave the national Church, not because of any new views as to Church order and government, but because of intellectual dissatisfaction with the standards of doctrine. Already the strict Calvinism of the Confession of Faith was felt by many ministers—and these not the least spiritual—to be too strait for them. Wesley's preaching had produced little effect in Presbyterian Scotland, where Whitefield's predestinarianism suited better with the theological temper of the people. But the time had come when Free Churchmanship would stand for liberty to think outside the prescribed formulas of the Church.

If it was a great thing to claim for the laity freedom to speak their mind in the choice of their minister, it was as great a thing to claim for the minister freedom to speak his mind upon the deepest things of faith unfettered by the terminology of a bygone century. In England Broad Churchmen of the type of F. D. Maurice were preaching the love of God to all men, and discussing questions of Revelation and Inspiration with a boldness that excited at once enthusiasm and apprehension. Their more difficult task was to reconcile their public utterances with their subscription to the articles of religion. The Church of England, however, took no action against them. The Church of Scotland was more consistent and less tolerant.

Early in 1828 a Scotch barrister, Mr. Thomas Erskine, had published a book entitled "The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel." The book had an instantaneous success. Thomas Erskine was a writer of real force and purity of style and a man of singular charm, who throughout his life maintained a warm friendship with many of the foremost literary men of the day. He was greatly attracted by the preaching of a young minister who was already beginning to be viewed with suspicion by the stern custodians of Scotch orthodoxy. This was John Macleod Campbell, who held the living of Row on the banks of the Gairloch, in Dumbartonshire. Macleod Campbell had already embraced with a full heart and all the strength of a virile and subtle intellect the idea of the universality of the Atonement; and what he believed he also spake. His was a rallying note certain to compel the adhesion of liberal minds especially of the younger generation. Among his earliest disciples was one of the most distinguished thinkers of his time—Alexander John Scott, afterwards assistant to Edward Irving, and subsequently Principal of Owens College, Manchester. In 1830 proceedings were instituted against Campbell. It was alleged against him that he had preached a sermon containing these words: "God loves every child of Adam with a love the measure of which is to be seen in the agonies of Christ"; and again, that "the person who knows that Christ died for every child of Adam is the person who is in the condition to say to every human being, 'Let there be peace with you, peace between you and your God.'" By an overwhelming majority the Presbytery recorded its "detestation and abhorrence of the doctrine contained in these two sentences." In May, 1831, in the General Assembly, sentence of deposition was pronounced against Mr. Campbell by a majority of 119 to 6. The same

Assembly then proceeded to deprive Mr. Scott of his license to preach. When both cases were concluded, we are told, the two friends walked home together. "After that dreary night in the Assembly," says Scott, "the dawn breaking upon us, as we returned at length, alike condemned, to our lodging in the new town of Edinburgh, I turned round and looked upon my companion's face under the pale light, and asked him, 'Could you sign the Confession now?' His answer was, 'No. The Assembly was right: our doctrine and the Confession are incompatible.'"

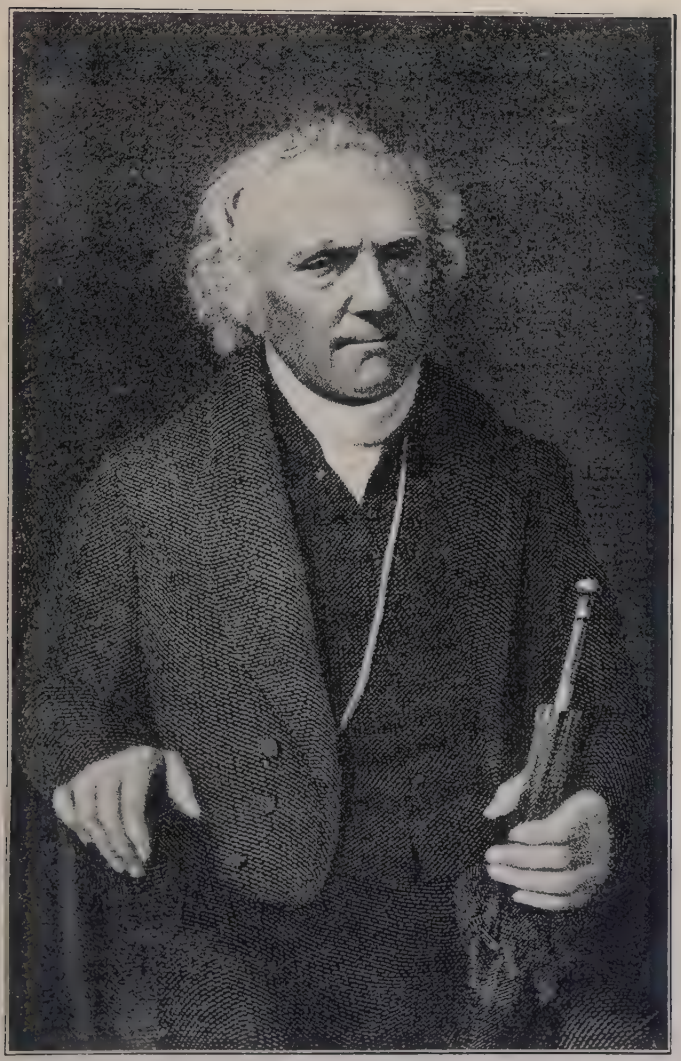
It must not be supposed that the Established Church was one whit more concerned to insist on every jot and tittle of its creed than the Free Churches that had been organised on the Presbyterian model. Ten years after the expulsion of Campbell and Scott from the Established Church, the Secession Church had to decide the question for or against intellectual liberty. James Morison was the son of Robert Morison, the Secession minister at Bathgate. As a probationer he exercised his ministry in the remote district of the Cabrach, in North Aberdeenshire. There he fought his way out of the old God-dishonouring formulas into a broader and nobler creed. The living faith of this large-hearted and broad-minded Evangelist wrought miracles among the simple folk of the district. Called south to Kilmarnock, James Morison delivered his soul in similar fashion there; in consequence of which he was suspended by the Secession Presbytery "from the exercise of his ministry and the fellowship of the Church," until he retracted his errors and expressed contrition. Against this sentence Morison appealed to the Synod, and the result of the appeal was that he was declared to be no longer connected with the United Secession Church. In 1842 his father was similarly dismissed for sympathising with his son's views,

and the Rev. A. C. Rutherford, of Falkirk, and the Rev. John Guthrie, of Kendal, were deposed in the following year. These four ministers met in conference, the result of which was that they published a manifesto which excited immense interest and stimulated theological inquiry throughout Scotland. It indicated a definite break with the accepted Calvinism of the Confession; set up the standard of a universal atonement and "resistible grace," and was less a defence than an attack. As to Church order, they declared for the Congregational rather than the Presbyterian government. Finally they set forth that this manifesto was never to be construed as a theological test or term of communion. Thus was the Evangelical Union founded, formal subscription to a creed being entirely abrogated. The first intention was not to create a new denomination but to provide a basis of agreement for those who adhered to various denominations but who were concerned to further liberty of thought and faith. The establishment of a Theological Seminary, however, soon became necessary, and for over fifty years James Morison presided over it, and by his largeness and liberality of thought, as well as by his saintliness of life, he attracted men of culture and power, and exercised an extraordinary influence for good. The number of churches in the Evangelical Union was never very great, but the value of their testimony was out of all proportion to their numbers. Theirs is the credit of having started the *Christian News*, which is to-day "the oldest religious paper in Britain." Through their various periodicals, indeed, they did much to extend the popularity of a humaner theology. After prolonged discussions of all the questions and interests involved, the Evangelical Union Churches and the Congregational Union Churches decided to unite forces in 1896, and on January 1st, 1897, the Union was actually effected.

Possibly the foundation of the Evangelical Union and the protest thus made on behalf of freedom of thought and faith would have met with a wider response had the public mind not been pre-occupied with a controversy that was to have a more majestic issue. Once again the problem of the rights and privileges of the Christian people within the Church of Christ had assumed a critical form. Once again the State had insisted on the superiority of the rights of the patron over the rights of the people; and once again the impotence of the Church in regard to its own most sacred functions had been strikingly illustrated. The secessions of the Erskines, and of the Relief "fathers," was now to be imitated on a heroic scale by those who had clung to the ideal of a national Church so long as there was a vestige of a hope that real spiritual independence might consist with nominal State control. By the stern logic of facts this bubble-hope was pricked, and men were called upon to choose between subservience to the State and a complete autonomy, when the latter could only be purchased by the sacrifice of all claim to the enjoyment of the ancient endowments of the Kirk of Scotland. For many years past one of the great ecclesiastical controversies of Scotland had been on the subject of Voluntaryism. In the Secession Churches the voluntary principle had steadily made its way. It had come to be realised more and more that a Church that was in any degree dependent upon State endowments could never expect to enjoy a full measure of liberty and independence. The great question to be decided, however, was whether pure Voluntaryism would prove equal to the adequate equipment and sustenance of a great religious community. Hitherto it had only been called upon to accomplish very moderate tasks. The duty immediately confronting it was a stupendous one; and on the response made

would depend the vindication of the Free Church idea as capable of a national interpretation. To lead such a movement demanded the combination of faith, wisdom, and enthusiasm, each in an exceptional degree. It was the great good fortune of Scotland that she had the man for the hour. One of the very greatest men of the nineteenth century, and one of the most sagacious statesmen ever given of God to any Church, was Thomas Chalmers. Carlyle wrote of him in terms that show that he might have included him in his gallery of heroes. "It is not often that the world has seen men like Thomas Chalmers, nor can the world afford to forget them; or in its most careless mood be willing to do it. Probably the time is coming when it will be more apparent than it is now to everyone that here, intrinsically, was the chief Scottish man of his time—a man possessed of such a massive geniality of intellect and temper as belonged to no other man. What a grand simplicity, broad humour, blent so kindly with enthusiastic ardour and blazing thought—a man of such mild, noble valour, strength, and piety, above all things of such perfect veracity, I have not met with in these times. Honour to him, honour belongs to him, and to the essential work he did—an everlasting continuance among the possessions of the world."

Thomas Chalmers, born at Anstruther, Fife, came of age as the nineteenth century began. His early enthusiasms were all scientific—mathematics, chemistry, botany, astronomy, biology, and political economy fascinated him in turn. Jonathan Edwards governed his theological conceptions, "the one idea which ministered to his soul all its rapture being the magnificence of the Godhead, and the universal subordination of all things to the one great purpose for which He evolved and was supporting creation." In the early years of his ministry at Kilmany in Fife, he belonged decidedly



THOMAS CHALMERS.

to what is known as the Moderate school, touching lightly, if at all, on the greatest themes of the Gospel, and making no appeal to experience. The death of a loved sister, followed by a long illness of his own, awakened him to deeper issues. He took a new grip of his ministry, discovered the awful power of the instrument he had handled so carelessly, and began to preach with irresistible passion of conviction. Glasgow called him, in 1815, first to the Tron Church; then in 1819 he began a memorable ministry in St. John's Church in that city. The course of his education was now seen to have been well ordered. His scientific training placed him on terms with the best-instructed minds in town and university; his study of political economy stood him in excellent stead when he came to deal with the problems of a big city. The exhausting labours of the next few years were such that when in 1823 he was called to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrew's, he accepted the position. He was now regarded as a leader of thought in Scotland; and his translation to the Chair of Divinity at Edinburgh was the recognition of the place he already occupied in the eye of the nation. But he was more than a theologian; he was a statesman, and no academic duties ever injured his humane interest in the condition of the people. Realising the inadequacy of the provision made for the religious needs of the people, he threw his whole soul into a campaign for church extension. Nearly two hundred new places of worship were erected by his instrumentality. Never had the Church of Scotland known a period of such rapid extension; yet these very "extension" churches were to go far to produce the Disruption, and the founder of these churches was to be the leader of a movement which was to empty them in order that a freer and worthier Church might be established in the land.

Yet at this time Chalmers was a vehement State Church man. In 1838 he delivered a series of lectures in London in defence of State-establishments before brilliant aristocratic audiences. His great point was the independence of the Church as a spiritual institution. He spoke as his great predecessor, John Knox, might have spoken, in glowing terms of the ideal heritage of the Scottish Church. How far the ideal and the actual were apart he was to learn by bitter experience. He claimed that the Church of Scotland was "the unfettered mistress of her doings," and he continued with impassioned eloquence, "the King by himself, or by his representative, might be the spectator of our proceedings; but what Lord Chatham said of the poor man's house is true in all parts of the Church to which I have the honour to belong—'In England every man's house is his castle; not that it is surrounded with walls and battlements—it may be a straw-built shed; every wind of heaven may whistle round it; every element of heaven may enter it; but the King cannot—the King *dare* not.'"

There was no such Church of Scotland save to Chalmers' desire and in Chalmers' imagination. Possibly, he would have pleaded that the Veto Act of 1833 had declared that "it is a fundamental of their Church that no pastor shall be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people." But the Veto Act was a mere parchment liberty, though undoubtedly designed to restore the "great body of the people to their true place in the Church." Trial was yet to be made whether the General Assembly had any power to make this law for the government of its own Church, and whether the State had any counter-claim to advance. The opinion of a great legal authority was calculated to shatter the bright illusions of Chalmers.

Said Lord President Hope: "That our Saviour is the Head of the Kirk of Scotland in any temporal, or legislative, or judicial sense is a position which I can signify by no other name than absurdity. The Parliament is the head of the Church, from whose Acts, and from whose Acts alone, it exists as the National Church, and from which alone it derives all its powers." Which was the conception most true to fact—that of the Lord President or that of the Edinburgh theological professor? Experience was about to show.

Between the Veto Act of 1833 and the Disruption of 1843 lies the "Ten Years' Conflict." The first trial of strength between Church and State was in the Auchterarder case of 1834. The patron of the living was the Earl of Kinnoul, and he presented it to a Mr. Young. Only two members and the patron's factor would sign the call, and 287 male heads of families protested. In consequence the presbytery set Mr. Young aside; but the patron appealed to the Court of Session, and eight judges to five found that the Presbytery had exceeded its powers. The Assembly appealed to the House of Lords, which in the following year dismissed the appeal. The principle of private patronage was thus unequivocally maintained. The most that Dr. Chalmers and his friends could do was to appoint a committee to confer with the Government so as to prevent these scandals in the future. The State, however, was clearly not going to climb down. In 1835 the parishioners of Lethendy vetoed the appointment of a Mr. Clark. In 1837 the Presbytery proceeded to ordain a Mr. Kesson to the charge. The Court of Session stepped in and interdicted the Presbytery. In spite of the interdict, the Presbytery proceeded with the ordination, and were subsequently arraigned at the bar of the Court of Session, sharply rebuked, and

warned that imprisonment awaited them if they repeated the offence. Chalmers' glowing periods on the independence of the Church sound singularly unreal in the light of this decision. Mr. Clark was awarded several thousands of pounds damages. The humiliation of the Church could hardly have been more complete.

The next test case concerned the parish of Marnock in the Presbytery of Strathbogie. In this case only one parishioner, the village publican, could be persuaded to sign the call on behalf of the patron's nominee, Mr. Edwards. Two hundred and sixty-one vetoed the appointment. The Presbytery at first rejected Mr. Edwards, but with the fear of the Court of Session upon them a majority—seven in number—resolved subsequently to proceed with the ordination and induction of Mr. Edwards. Thereupon a Commission of Assembly prohibited the seven from exercising their ministerial duties. The prohibition had no effect. They applied to the Court of Session and obtained a decree forbidding any other ministers from preaching in their parishes—either in churches, churchyards, or schoolrooms. A more monstrous injunction was never issued. The most ordinary principles of religious liberty were sacrificed. Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Guthrie, Dr. Gordon, and other conspicuous preachers came down to the district and preached in defiance of the Court of Session. They were threatened with various pains and penalties, but the Court was better advised than to take action. Meanwhile the seven servile ministers, who had been suspended by the Church but upheld by the State, did actually induct Mr. Edwards in spite of solemn public protests, and emphatic demonstrations on the part of the parishioners. The Assembly retaliated by deposing the seven ministers.

In 1841 a new scandal arose. The Presbytery of

Garioch, Aberdeenshire, without appealing to the Assembly at all, resolved to proceed with the settlement of a minister at Culsalmond in spite of the overwhelming opposition of the parishioners. The eventual result in this case also was that the presentee was upheld by the Law Court, and repudiated by the Church through its Assembly.

Matters had reached a deadlock, and it was clear that one side must give way. The Assembly of 1842 acted in defence of its ecclesiastical privileges as the Parliament of Charles had acted in defence of civil privilege. It propounded a Petition of Right. This document is commonly called the Claim of Right. It was a temperate, cogent historic declaration, the work of Mr. Alexander Murray Dunlop, to whose wise and fearless statesmanship the Reform party in the Church owed very much at this time. The Claim of Right set forth how ancient constitutional privileges had been infringed, or even abrogated; and it declared the "encroachments of the Court of Session" to be "unconstitutional and illegal." The majority in favour of the adoption of the Claim of Right was more than two to one. That it was little likely to find acceptance at the hands of the State authorities was shown by a further legal decision in January, 1843. Presbyteries had acted on the assumed right to appoint ministers to new parishes where no question of patronage seemed to be involved. They were now told they were exceeding their powers; they had no authority to act thus independently of the secular power. There was nothing for it but for those who advocated the independence of the Church to prepare to leave the Establishment, and reorganise themselves on the basis of liberty. The memorable General Assembly opened its session on May 18, 1843. The retiring Moderator, Dr. Welsh, preached according to custom in St. Giles', after

which the Assembly adjourned to St. Andrew's Church. Outside the streets were thronged by vast multitudes, eager, expectant—discussing who of the Reformers would have grace to play the man, and whether the courage of any would fail at the critical hour. When the Assembly had been opened by prayer, Dr. Welsh rose and declared that as it was not a free Assembly it could not be recognised as the Court of the Church. He then read a protest which was signed by two hundred and three members; after which he laid it on the table and moved to the door, bowing as he retired. Quietly but promptly the well-known leaders of the Reform party followed him—Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Guthrie, Dr. Cunningham, Dr. Candlish, Dr. Gordon, and others—and the whole left side of the Assembly, with many others, passed out into the street. As soon as the people outside realised that "principle had triumphed over interest," they welcomed the seceders with the utmost enthusiasm and shouts of "They come! Thank God they come!" and escorted them with demonstrations of sympathy to their new place of assembly at Tanfield Hall. To quote the description from Lord Cockburn's journal, "The Lord Provost of Edinburgh walked with them to Canonmills, where the late Provost of Glasgow and the Sheriff of Midlothian joined them. And that extraordinary procession was dignified by about eight old Moderators, two Principals of Universities, and four theological professors." Altogether four hundred and seventy-four ministers signed the protest which gave them liberty at the expense of their means of livelihood; and one hundred and ninety preachers or licentiates of the Church asked that their names should be added. Ninety-seven theological students of Edinburgh College chose freedom; and also a majority of those at St. Andrew's. Well might it be said, as Mr. Gladstone

records, by a Roman Catholic dismayed at the progress of unbelief, that this assertion of the authority of conscience and positive religious conviction had given him "singular comfort."

It is impossible to trace at length the history of the Church thus impressively inaugurated. It must suffice to say that its progress has been worthy of its origin. One memorable fact in connection with its foundation was that every foreign missionary of the Church of Scotland without exception joined the Free Church. One of these was Dr. Alexander Duff, whose educational work in India marked an epoch in British missions. It was a heavy financial burden thus suddenly thrown upon the new community, and the strong men who were its leaders may well have thought that Voluntaryism was on its trial. But the people of Scotland were with them; and the edifice of the Free Church was built out of the sacrifices of the nation. The bare figures as to money raised for church-building, manses, sustentation fund, missionary enterprise, during the first few months are probably without parallel in the history of Christendom. "Before two years had passed *five hundred churches* were opened, and by the end of 1848 no less than *seven hundred* were occupied. Over £360,000 had been raised for the Building Fund." But the building of churches was only a small part of their task. Not only must churches be erected, but ministers must be supported. The Free Church Sustentation Fund owes everything to the genius of Chalmers, who had worked out its details before the Disruption actually occurred. The first year produced £68,000, and fifty years later the total was no less than £175,000. The large-hearted eloquent Thomas Guthrie, prince of Edinburgh preachers, and irresistible platform advocate, shouldered the burden of raising a fund for the erection of manses. To such

effect did he plead his cause that in 1846 he was able to report that over £116,000 had been raised, and that £200 might be voted to every congregation towards the erection of a minister's house. In addition to this giving on the heroic scale, theological colleges had to be built, manned, and financially equipped. In Edinburgh Aberdeen, and Glasgow, the Free Church has its training centres to-day, and handsome edifices testify to the spirit in which the necessity was met. On the foreign field not only had the missionaries to be supported, but new buildings provided for them, to all of which demands the enthusiasm and liberality of the Church was more than equal. Never had the Scottish people made more convincing demonstration of the genuineness of their religious character than in the unstinted support given by them to the great Free Church movement of 1843.

In our sketch of the dramatic movement and *motif* we have allowed ourselves little space to distinguish characters. None of all those who were prominently concerned was a sounder Free Churchman in intellect than Dr. Candlish. He was on most questions a man before his time. He pleaded for Catholic Emancipation when the very name of it was anathema to Covenanting Scots ; and his theological and critical views were equally with his political in advance of his generation. He deplored the fact that " men's minds were not open to large and liberal views." He himself set an example, not only in theory but in action, to his age.

One of the famous personages on the crowded canvas of the Disruption was Hugh Miller, geologist and journalist. Hugh Miller's great service to the movement was done by his editing of the *Witness* newspaper. It was as a mason and quarryman that he laid the foundation of his geological knowledge, and thoroughness and minuteness marked all his work. A " Letter to

Lord Brougham, " in which he set forth the need for the Church to give expression to the people's will, and her historic claims to liberty of action, attracted much attention. He was appointed first editor of the *Witness*, and right valiantly did he maintain the cause entrusted to his advocacy.

In 1847 Chalmers passed away. There can hardly be a question that he was the foremost Scotsman of his age. Whether we consider his pulpit gifts or his theological learning, or his ecclesiastical statesmanship, or that philanthropic genius which devoted itself to persevering attack upon the poverty and wickedness of the Edinburgh slums, or whether we consider his noble simplicity of character, and the high-mindedness that would not sully its ideals nor consent to forget them—Chalmers is a heroic figure in the story of modern Scotland. Twenty-five foolscap volumes contain his varied contributions to literature; but his greatest contribution was to the history of religious freedom, and the Free Church of Scotland is, in the main, that contribution. Scotland has been rich in great Churchmen, yet it may be truly said that from the days of John Knox until now there hath not arisen a greater than Thomas Chalmers. " It was his belief," we are told in striking words, " that whatsoever things are Scriptural are politic. Whatsoever is in the Bible shall yet be in the world. Nothing is too great to hope for which Divine goodness has promised; and nothing is impossible which God has asked His Church to perform."

For some considerable time the Free Church was too much exercised with problems of self-government, sustenance, and organisation to admit of much discussion of critical and theological questions. But it was inevitable that as the ship passed into smoother waters, leisure would be found for inquiries which, if

they seem less practical, are apt to produce even more revolutionary results. New theological conceptions were gaining ground in the South, and the views of men like McLeod Campbell, and Morison could not be dismissed as easily as their advocates could be unchurched. Moreover, critical investigation into the date, authorship, contents, and composition of the various books of the Bible was producing a new attitude of mind towards the current theories of inspiration and revelation. It had yet to be decided whether the Free Churches of Scotland would be wide enough to include men whose views of Christian truth had been profoundly influenced by such inquiries as these. During the first quarter of a century of its existence these doctrinal problems did not assume an acute form. But the famous Robertson Smith heresy trial was the explosion from thunder-clouds that had been long gathering, and that were heavily charged with hostile electricities. The immediate occasion of the bursting of the storm was an article contributed by Mr. Robertson Smith, the Free Church Hebrew Professor at Aberdeen, to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," under the heading "Bible." Many of the opinions advanced in this article are too familiar to our minds to-day to occasion any alarm. But in 1875 the composite character of the Pentateuch, the possibility that most of the Psalms were not the work of David, the certainty of a late editing of Jewish history and legislation, the postulate that the prophetic writings were in the main not predictive—these were critical positions that seemed like an insidious attack on the very foundations of religion. Still more alarming was the crude suggestion that the Synoptical Gospels themselves were "non-apostolic digests of spoken and written apostolic tradition." The article was especially formidable as

being the work of a singularly brilliant and able man, whose profound scholarship and encyclopædic knowledge had already won for him a high reputation, which was increased by the fearlessness and candour with which he advanced his critical conclusions. The first body to consider Dr. Robertson Smith's writings seriously was the College Committee, who reported that there was no ground for "a process for heresy," but gravely rebuked the professor, whose article was of "a dangerous and unsettling tendency." This was in 1877; and the matter could not obviously be permitted to remain in this position. In the General Assembly of that year, it was decided that, pending an inquiry at Aberdeen, Mr. Smith should be suspended. Even at this time Mr. Smith found able advocates, who rejoiced that the Free Church had furnished a man of such gifts for the work of critical inquiry which the Christian Church was bound to prosecute. Suspension, however, having been voted, there was almost infinite difficulty as to the method of procedure to be adopted next. Various forms of "libel" were drawn up, modified, and abandoned; and at last the charge against him was reduced to an attack on his theory that Deuteronomy was not an historical book, but had the historical form given to it by a writer of a later age. There was also much shifting of responsibility from the Assembly to the Aberdeen Presbytery, and back to the Assembly. Finally, by a majority of *nine* in a large Assembly, it was carried that the libel be withdrawn, but Professor Smith be admonished for "unguarded and incomplete statements." Mr. Smith subsequently replied, admitting that he was to blame for certain of these statements. It should be noted at the same time that he was received by the great audience with extraordinary demonstrations of sympathy—in itself a re-

markable indication of the change that was coming over the mind of Scotland in regard to critical and theological questions. Everything seemed now to have been satisfactorily settled; and certainly there would have been no disposition to reopen the controversy had not a new volume of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" been found to contain an article by Mr. Smith even more extreme in its advanced views than the former one. In the excited state of the public mind this sounded like a deliberate challenge, not to say defiance, to his critics. They had understood from his reply in the Assembly that he was prepared to take a more moderate and guarded tone; he on his part regarded the finding of the Assembly as a complete exoneration of himself. The thunderstorm returned on its course, and burst this time with increased violence and effect. A committee examined the article on "Hebrew Language and Literature" which was complained of; and on its report having been submitted to a special commission, it was evident that the gravest issues had been raised. The Assembly of 1881 had before it a long statement of the grievances under which the Church might be conceived to have suffered owing to the writings of Mr. Robertson Smith, and concluding with a motion that it was no longer safe and advantageous for the Church that he should continue to teach in one of her colleges. Then followed an animated and excited debate, in which the professor defended himself with immense ability, though not always in the most conciliatory spirit. Finally, Dr. Rainy's motion was carried by 428 to 245, and Robertson Smith ceased to be a Free Church theological professor. As a lecturer and author, however, he had a brilliant career. The University of Cambridge elected him to be, firstly, Professor of Arabic, and then University Librarian. He

became the editor of a new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," for which position his extraordinary range of learning eminently fitted him. His books on the Old Testament and "The Religion of the Semites" added to his great reputation. He died in March, 1894.

It should, in fairness, be remembered that he was a minister of the Free Church under the Confession of Faith, and before a large liberty of thought was secured to signatories by the Declaratory Act. It may be urged with some force, therefore, that the Church by its action did not exceed its duty. The school of critical inquiry which he helped to found did not disappear after his exclusion. On the contrary, some of the most able and brilliant of its exponents have been professors and ministers of the Free Church. But Robertson Smith's trial and deposition gave force to the movement in favour of some statute guarantee of freedom of faith and thought, so that sensitive consciences might not be distressed by the frowning dogmatism of the Confession. It began to be seen that it was not desirable to restrict the free exercise of reverent intelligence in the Church of Christ. Dissatisfaction with the iron standards of seventeenth-century Calvinism made itself felt in every branch of Scottish Presbyterianism. If the Churches were not to lose the services of many of their most cultured and thoughtful sons, it was clear that they must enlarge the bounds of freedom. Each Church in turn decided to do so; and the so-called Declaratory Acts have this end in view. Large liberty of interpretation on difficult and doubtful points of the Confession is conceded, while at the same time the final decision as to whether the true limits of Christian thought have been exceeded remains with the Assembly—the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophets! One consequence of the Declaratory Act in the Free Church

was a considerable Highland secession. Untouched by the modern progressive spirit, and clinging with characteristic obstinacy to the Covenanting model, they regarded any concession to freedom of thought as a sacrifice to idols and a slight upon the true Faith.

All that remains to be told now is how it came to pass that the United Presbyterian Church of Erskine and Gillespie joined forces with the Free Church of Chalmers and Candlish, to form the United Free Church of Scotland. As far back as 1863 far-sighted and large-hearted pioneers had proposed this ; but the time had not come. The United Presbyterian Church was willing ; but the Free Church, had perhaps, not so absolutely broken with State Church traditions as to care to commit itself so far. The years that followed completed its education, and when the union actually took place neither Church could be said to excel the other in appreciation of Free Church principles. Before this occurred, two smaller streams had swollen the Free Church river. The reader will recall the two splits from Burghers and Anti-Burghers on the civil magistrate controversy. These had amalgamated under the title "Original Secession Church," and now threw in their lot with the Free Church. An even more ancient body was that of the Reformed Presbyterians, or the Cameronians. For two hundred years they had persevered in their separate life and organisation. Now, with one exception, all its congregations sought inclusion in the Free Church. Evidently the star of union was in the ascendant ; and in 1895 the Free Church, now admirably led by Dr. Rainy, opened negotiations for union with the United Presbyterian Church. The latter was no less prepared than in 1863 for a consummation so devoutly to be wished. In 1897 a committee was appointed to consider the "practical questions involved in union." It was re-

ported that in regard to "doctrine, government, discipline, and worship," the two Churches had no disagreement. The matter was now remitted for discussion to the local Presbyteries, and in 1899 it appeared that all the Sessions and Presbyteries of the United Presbyterian Church had reported in favour of union wholly or conditionally, while in the Free Church seventy-one Presbyteries were in favour and four against. On May 31, 1900, the vote was taken in the Free Church General Assembly, when the Declaration in favour of union was carried by 592 to 29. The splendid climax of these negotiations was on October 31, 1900, when members of both Synods marched to a hall specially fitted up in the Waverley Market, and the two Moderators joined hands in token of lasting union in the presence of a vast multitude of sympathetic spectators. By universal acclamation Dr. Rainy was appointed first moderator of the new United Free Church—a Church which includes eleven Synods, sixty-five Presbyteries, and almost sixteen hundred and fifty congregations.

The only cloud in the sky was in consequence of the proceedings of an irreconcilable minority of the Free Church congregations, principally in the Highlands. Among them the tradition of the national recognition of religion still lingers; and they repudiated union with those robust and pronounced Free Churches which had long discovered and openly proclaimed the impotence of the State to advance the purity and power of the Christian faith. To overcome these scruples on the part of the secessionists no policy is possible but one of patience. They, too, are a Free Church community, entitled to pursue their own course and follow their own convictions; and experience teaches us that it may safely be left to time to preach the advantages of integration and the essential weakness of disunion where polity and doctrine so nearly coincide.

CHAPTER XVI.

Progress and Unity.

In January, 1798, a famous meeting took place between the son of a Unitarian minister and a candidate for the Unitarian pulpit. The place of meeting was Shrewsbury, to which town young William Hazlitt, of Wem, had walked to hear Samuel Taylor Coleridge preach. Hazlitt's father was for a quarter of a century Unitarian minister at Wem. Previous to that time he had sought rest for the sole of his foot in America, where he might have been head of a college at a respectable salary if he would have subscribed the confession; which he declared he would rather die in a ditch than do. The son was a true Protestant for liberty of thought, and although he did not cleave to his father's theology, nor practise his Puritan morality, he became a fiery advocate of the freedom of religion from State control, and Nonconformity has seldom received more splendid literary vindication on that side of its testimony than at his hands. The man he walked to Shrewsbury to hear preached a sermon on the separation of Church and State—the radical opposition between "the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity." Coleridge did not become Unitarian minister at Shrewsbury. His destiny was very different. He continued to preach—Charles Lamb never heard him do anything else!—but rather in society and the Press than from the pulpit.

He developed in directions sympathetic to orthodox Christianity, and lived to expound the Thirty-nine Articles and to declare that he could cheerfully sign them all. Erratic and pathetic as his life was, it would not be easy to exaggerate his influence over thinking people. His emphasis of the self-evidencing power of truth; his thesis that truth is what finds us, magnifying, as it does, the individual soul, furnished the Nonconformist with his most effective weapon in the war against an aggressive ecclesiasticism. The nineteenth century was to be the century of Tractarianism in England—the century of a revival of mediæval sacerdotal and sacramentarian theories. England was to hear the reassertion of the Church's claim to implicit belief and obedience over against the claims of the individual reason and conscience. A more elaborate and sensuous ritual was only the symbol of the revival of certain ecclesiastical theories which had found but little support in England since the days of Laud. In Hazlitt and Coleridge we see representatives of two lines of Nonconformist activity during the century. Hazlitt stands for a Nonconformity that was mainly zealous for the political application of the principle of individual liberty and right. Coleridge stands for the philosophical rather than theological presentation of Christian belief, suggesting a new order of Christian evidence, and insisting that the old verities are capable of new statement, and that the loss of dogma may be the gain of faith. It was the great advantage of the Free Churches that they were outside the controversy which became sensational at the secession of Newman and Manning. Unaffected by the extreme tendency of Puseyism to depreciate the reason, they were not driven into rationalism as were so many who were involved in the reaction against the Tractarians. Their sym-

pathies came rather to be with the Broad school, represented by Maurice, and Thomas Arnold, and Kingsley and Robertson, all of whom may be said with justice to have had more influence over Nonconformists than over members of their own Church. It was generally felt, however, that the almost absolute disappearance of the Broad Church party was due to the immense difficulty of reconciling such views with loyalty to the articles and rubrics of the Established Church. When Nonconformists saw a robust intelligence like Kingsley's driven to defend the Athanasian Creed, they were strengthened in their convictions as to the paralysing effect of an Establishment. Their dislike of a system which set a premium upon fidelity to outworn forms of doctrine, and so discouraged all progress of religious thought, increased as the years passed. Free Churchmen themselves were becoming enfranchised from the rigid Calvinistic formulas, even where Arminianism, with its seeming stress on man rather than on God, had few attractions for them.

The first quarter of the nineteenth century was memorable for the preaching of Robert Hall. In his own order, he was and has remained unrivalled. A master of the stately, periodic style of pulpit oratory, his mind moved most easily in the loftiest regions of reverent speculation. Born in 1764, the youngest of fourteen children, and himself the son of a Baptist pastor, his delicate health seemed at first to preclude the idea of the ministry. In consenting to that vocation, however, he followed the obvious line of destiny marked out for him in his character and talents. The famous Broadmead Chapel at Bristol was the scene of his earliest and latest labours. Between these two periods he ministered to large congregations in Cambridge and Leicester. In the days when, as an assistant, he first drew throngs of eager listeners to Broadmead,

ROBERT HALL.

(*From an old Print.*)

he was heard with a good deal of suspicion by the representatives of the elder orthodoxy. He confessed himself "not a Calvinist in the strict and proper sense of the term," which in itself was enough to perturb sensitive minds. A sharp dispute with the senior minister determined him to listen to overtures from Cambridge, where he became associated with the Rev. Robert Robinson, whose somewhat colourless views he was destined to disappoint by the growing depth of his preaching. Yet the breadth of his sympathies never suffered, as his "Apology for the Freedom of the Press" abundantly demonstrates; while his sermon on "Modern Infidelity" as effectively proved that he was not willing to strike his flag to those who unwarrantably identified Free Thought with blank atheism or agnosticism. Mr. Hall's influence over the undergraduates was so strong that a meeting of Heads of Houses was actually convened to consider how it could be prevented. It was then that Dr. Mansel, Master of Trinity, declared in unmeasured terms his admiration of Robert Hall, and stupefied his colleagues by confessing that if he were not Master of Trinity he should attend at the Baptist chapel himself. From Cambridge Mr. Hall removed to Leicester, and from Leicester, in 1826, he returned to Broadmead, Bristol, in which city he died five years later. At the height of his power he produced such effects upon his hearers as perhaps no other preacher of modern times has equalled. He was known to draw an audience to its feet and hold it thus spell-bound for as long as half an hour. On great occasions, when some striking event of national significance had to be commemorated, he rose to superb heights of eloquence, and his sermons in advocacy of the missionary cause show how the majestic idea of the Kingdom of God had captured his imagination.

With him, as an influence on his time, there deserves to be commemorated a very different man, of no popular gifts, but of signal intellectual power and literary ability, an essayist who is worthy of association with Coleridge—John Foster. Foster was the minister of several congregations of Baptists in the course of his life, but was never direct and simple enough in his pulpit style to interest any but the few elect hearers who were mentally able to follow him. He was a man of genius, and his love of seclusion made pastoral work a burden to him. But with his pen he nobly served the cause he could only indifferently help with the living voice. He supplied multitudes of preachers with seed-thoughts, and in his letters and essays he allied himself with every liberal movement. We can hardly be wrong in saying that his famous letter to the Rev. Edward White profoundly affected the general attitude of the Church towards the dogma of eternal torment as the punishment for the sins of time; and while it led Mr. White to take refuge in the theory of annihilation, it started Samuel Cox and others on critical investigations which resulted in a bold advocacy of the "larger hope," a theory to which Tennyson gave incomparable expression in "In Memoriam." Foster died in 1843.

It may be said here with appropriateness that the liberty afforded to Free Churchmen by the simplicity of the conditions under which they worked resulted in a rich comprehensiveness within which men of every order of Christian belief were associated. There were not wanting able and eminent representatives of the older Calvinism; there were "Baxterians" moderating between the two extremes; there were uncompromising Arminians who clung nevertheless to the traditional dogma as to the future of the impenitent; there were annihilationists and universalists. All this diversity

was seen to consist with absolute loyalty to Christ and faith in His living Presence in the midst of His people. It was, of course, as inevitable as it was salutary that there should be vigorous controversy between those who held these distinctive opinions. Free Churchmen have never coveted the peace which is the insipid fruit of indifference; and the habit of suffering for their beliefs has rather schooled them to state their views in the most uncompromising form. The history of the nineteenth century is the history of the growth of the tolerant spirit in the Free Churches, and of the power to separate the accidentals from the essentials of our common Christianity. There was bound to be sharp conflict before a newer school of eschatology and a newer school of Biblical criticism had established a right to think and speak under Free Church auspices.

We are bound to remember, also, that if the Free Churches offered the ideal conditions to progressive minds, they also afforded an opportunity to those who sought for assurance and stability in a narrower dogmatism. From about the year 1825 there dates the movement known as "Brethrenism," or "Plymouth Brethrenism," the earliest roots of which would appear to have been rather in Dublin than in Plymouth. Anthony Norris Groves, reading for orders in the Church of England with a view to service in the foreign field, met with a small circle of kindred spirits in Dublin for prayer and Bible study. Certain conclusions forced themselves upon his mind which were fatal to his clerical ambition. Among them was a conviction as to the unlawfulness of war, and that the article of the Church of England declaring war to be lawful was unscriptural. There was much in early Brethrenism which was akin to Quakerism—the prominence of this view as to the unlawfulness of war, and the opportunity for any member to take

part in the meeting for exhortation. But one leading custom absolutely separated the two systems. The Brethren met to observe the Lord's Supper, and remember the Lord's death by the breaking of bread *every* Sunday. Groves's mind was gradually enfranchised from his early clerical prejudices, and he came to see that no ordination was necessary to preach the Gospel, and as the Church Missionary Society would not authorise a layman to preside at the Lord's Supper even when no clergyman was near, his aspiration for service in the mission field was at the time unrealised. Another prominent figure in early Brethrenism was also a strong Churchman—John Gifford Bellett—who traced his new conviction to some words of Groves, "We should come together in all simplicity as disciples, not waiting on any pulpit or ministry, but trusting that the Lord would edify us together by ministering as He pleased and send good from the midst of ourselves." The most masterful spirit, however, was that of John Nelson Darby, who more than any other stamped Brethrenism with his personality, and who by his arbitrariness and intolerance was mainly responsible for the deep divisions which took place in early years. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and ordained a priest by Archbishop Magee. His early ideals were High Church with a distinct leaning to Rome. He belonged to the school of High Churchmen who have enough feeling for the dignity of the Church of Christ to resent her subordination to the State. An anti-Erastian he was from the first; and when his sacerdotalism dissolved beneath the touch of critical inquiry, his sense of the prerogative of the Church remained. He was intensely indignant at the low view of the Church and its privileges which the Archbishop and all sections of the Irish Church adopted, and vehemently contended for "a spiritual supremacy independent

of civil government." There could only be one consequence to Darby—and in 1828 he resigned his curacy, and henceforth his strange and somewhat unhappy life-history is bound up with the developments of Brethrenism. The new order of church life came to be associated with a number of distinctive habits. The study of unfulfilled prophecy was one of the most prominent; a study which was largely responsible for that over-emphasis of the letter of Scripture which was the root-evil of Brethrenism. While cultivating an intense and narrow fidelity to custom, Brethrenism professed to stand at first for the undenominational spirit. Loyalty to any form of ecclesiasticism was reprobated. Stress was nevertheless laid on the unity arising out of communion. All the circles of Brethren were conceived as bound together in an intimate union. Great simplicity of living, even extending to asceticism, characterised the early Brethren; and some endeavoured to realise the communism of the apostolic age. Notable and noble examples of giving on the heroic scale are to be found in their history; some among them bringing all their possessions to lay at the feet of Christ for the extension of His Kingdom abroad or at home.

But in the history of Brethrenism every other feature is subordinate to the extraordinary ascendency which Darby exercised over the minds of his contemporaries. Perhaps his most notable disciple was the famous brother of Cardinal Newman, Francis William Newman, who afterwards called him "the Ignatius Loyola of his day." Newman has told us of Darby's unflinching affirmation that every word of Scripture "is from the Spirit, and is for eternal service." This literalism, while seemingly saving him from many perplexities, was bound to prove divisive in the long run. However, at the beginning all promised well. Plymouth,

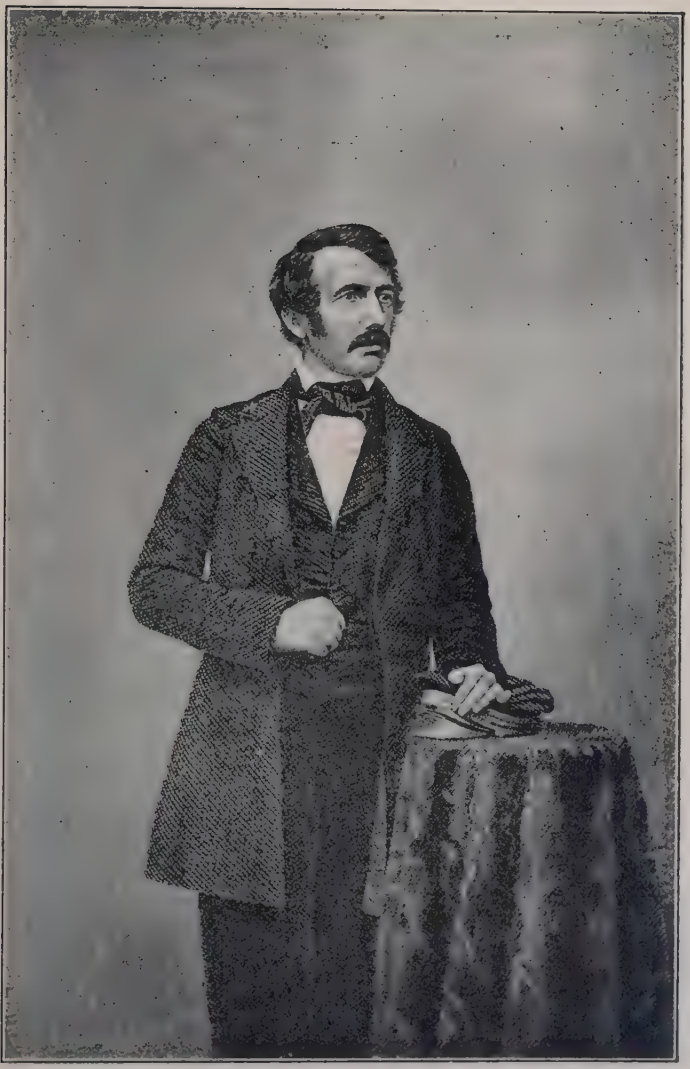
with a meeting of a thousand members, came to be known as the headquarters of the movement, and here the leaders were frequently to be found. Among them was a man of Quaker extraction and no inconsiderable theological distinction, Benjamin Wills Newton. He, too, had abandoned the thought of ordination to embrace the beliefs and follow the fortunes of what he felt was the more scriptural model. But if Plymouth was the most influential centre, Bristol was to have the more memorable history. Bristol Brethrenism is bound up with the name and philanthropic labours of George Müller, a young Prussian, who passed like so many of the greatest saints from the inferno of deliberate wickedness to the paradise of conscious redemption and spiritual fellowship. After an early ministry at Teignmouth, during which he adopted Baptist views and gradually introduced the "open" ministry, he began his work at Bristol, which extended over half a century, and was especially memorable for the foundation, growth, and support of his great orphanages, for which he did not beg money publicly, but only through the medium of prayer. Müller represented the nobler and more catholic tradition of Brethrenism according to the Moravian model, and it was the lasting misfortune of the movement that the influence of Darby was more aggressive and powerful, for, as has been said, beginning "with universal communion Darby ended with universal excommunication." He converted one of the simplest and most brotherly of systems into one of the narrowest and most exclusive of cliques. We cannot trace the story through the painful chapters of bitterness and disunion and fratricidal strife. Previous to these dark and disastrous experiences there had been a happy era of almost romantic expansion. Groves, fulfilling early ambition, had travelled to the far East,

missioning as he went. Darby had sown seed among the Vaudois in Lausanne and elsewhere. Müller had propagated Brethrenism in Germany. The possibilities of their enterprise seemed boundless, and their faith equal to the realisation. But in 1845 the days of strife began. Old differences between Darby and Newton culminated in an open breach ; and eventually all the leaders became involved in the quarrel. It was, thereafter, a fight for supremacy, and Darby's more masterful spirit gave him the advantage, his personal gain resulting in loss to the denominational character and unity. Excommunications were freely dealt out to those who had the hardihood to differ from the dominant party. A spirit of suspicion and intolerance was introduced which has been the bane of Brethrenism ever since, and has largely neutralised its influence. It may be added that it is utterly out of touch with the other Free Churches in that its members, for the most part, look upon politics as worldly, and therefore impossible to the Christian. No help can be counted upon from Plymouth Brethren in any of the great national controversies for liberty and legislative right. It is fair to add that Darbyism never extinguished the communion of "open" brethren, who stood by the earlier traditions, recognised fellow-Christians in believers who organised themselves after a different fashion, and adopted a less exclusive attitude in regard to participation in the "breaking of bread."

But where conditions of freedom had been created, free minds would avail themselves of them. It would not be easy to over-estimate the broadening effect upon the theology of the Church at home due to foreign missions. Probation for the heathen after death was a belief that forced itself upon even the most conservative missionaries by their experiences in the foreign

field. Translations of the sacred books of India and China enlarged men's views of inspiration. At the same time the multiplication of proofs of the power of Christ to transform the most savage and degraded people strengthened immensely the faith of the Church in the Gospel. In 1836 John Williams sailed from our shores, amid extraordinary demonstrations of popular interest and sympathy, to resume his apostolic labours in the South Seas, and to die as a martyr on the shore of Erromanga. Twenty years later David Livingstone returned to England, having "put a girdle" around Central Africa. That the greatest explorer of all time should be a Free Church missionary, and that to the end of his glorious life he should retain undimmed his faith in the Gospel as the only power able to regenerate and civilise humanity, were facts calculated to confirm and stimulate missionary zeal at home and abroad among the Nonconformist communities.

It happened that the year in which Livingstone returned to England was 1856, when Free Churchmen were agitated by what was known as the "Rivulet" controversy. The "Rivulet" is a collection of tender, devout, and spiritual poems of a sacred character, many of which have since found their way into the hymnody of all churches. Their author was a man of very fine mind and intense spirituality—Thomas Toke Lynch, Congregational minister of Grafton-street, London. Some of those who suspect the orthodoxy of any writer who does not express his faith in dogmatic terms fell upon this volume and denounced the author in unmeasured terms. As Lynch himself put it, they wanted not "sweetness," but "lumps of sugar," not belief but creed. In the "Rivulet" there was sugar enough, but in solution. The worst offender among the critics was Dr. Campbell, the able but overbearing editor of the *British Banner*. On the



DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

other hand, Lynch did not lack for defenders. Conspicuous among them was a man who deserves more than a perfunctory tribute, who for many years was the foremost preacher in London, and whose voice was never silent when any interest of civil and religious liberty was to be served. Mr. Edward White once described the personal aspect of Thomas Binney in these words: "The vast and stalwart Northumbrian frame, towering in majesty above the crowd, was surmounted by a head, in comparison with minor ecclesiastical crania, like the dome of a temple." With this impressive presence went singular largeness of mind and heart. He had "a Shakespearian versatility of kindliness," and the "far-reaching compass of his sympathies" was very manifest in his preaching. He became minister of the King's Weigh House in 1829, and from that central vantage-ground he continued to address himself to the ear of London to the end of his life. He is perhaps best remembered as an author by some vigorous and breezy addresses to young men bearing the title, "Is It Possible to Make the Best of Both Worlds?"—a book which he is said to have regretted publishing, but which had great vogue at the time. His best contribution to public controversy was a trenchant pamphlet plea for honesty in subscription, entitled "Conscientious Clerical Nonconformity."

It is capable of argument that the first half of the nineteenth century was the golden age of Nonconformist preachers. Men of commanding personality moulded thought and inspired practical philanthropy from central Free Church pulpits in the great towns and cities. Not to know Jay of Bath was to argue yourself unknown. To John Foster he was the prince of preachers, and to Sheridan "the most manly orator he had ever heard." What Raffles was in Liverpool, John Angell James in

Birmingham, Robert Halley in Manchester, Robert Winter Hamilton in Leeds, James Parsons in York, Ralph Wardlaw in Glasgow, John Pye-Smith, James Sherman, Caleb Morris, John Leifchild, and others in London cannot be told within the limits of our space. They were, perhaps, men of a somewhat narrow range of ideas, and often with a stilted conventional sermon style, but the force of their personality and power of their convictions triumphed over all deficiencies. Treated by their hearers and admirers with an exaggerated reverence, they nevertheless were true as steel to the great popular causes of their time. In the battles for Reform they had no misgivings as to the side they were to support; they fought for the people of England against privilege and monopoly. When Sherman refused to make the famine of Corn-law days a matter of prayer because the Government would not free the ports, he not only spoke with manly common-sense, but he declared the belief of Free Churchmen everywhere that God is on the side of freedom and the people. When a prominent statesman of our own day affirmed that Nonconformity had "a consistent legend of civil enlightenment" he spoke what cannot be denied.

In one of the greatest moral crusades of the century Free Churchmen have taken a leading part. It would be idle to deny that the earliest attempts to identify the Churches with the work of Temperance Reform were very coldly received. In many places they were fiercely resented. Enthusiastic abstainers were driven out of churches for the offence of seeking to start Bands of Hope. Methodists who had forgotten Wesley's tremendous words against strong drink were with difficulty moved to sympathy with the campaign of the "men of Preston." The proprieties of genteel Independent congregations were outraged by the zeal of these new

apostles. Yet even then pioneers were not lacking who were willing to bear reproach in the interests of a beneficent reformation. Well-known ministers like James Sherman and Dr. John Pye-Smith were openly sympathetic from the first. Most of the early leaders of the Temperance crusade in England came out of the Nonconformist Churches; and the Puritan spirit never fastened upon an issue more clearly in harmony with its best traditions than this one of saving their country from the demoralisation of drink. The work of Joseph Livesey, Robert Rae, John Henry Raper, and thousands of kindred spirits is beyond praise. They fixed attention upon this most urgent of moral problems; and they roused the sluggish conscience of the churches in regard to it. The movement has covered the land with Bands of Hope and Temperance Societies, and there is every prospect that the State will soon see fit to legislate in the directions which the Temperance reformers have for so long been indicating.

While Nonconformists played a prominent part thus in an agitation which was confined to no portion of the Christian Church, they steadily carried forward the agitation to which they were specially committed for the establishment of full civil and religious liberty. Some of the worst of the old Acts had, as we have seen, vanished from the statute-book; but many grievances and disabilities remained. Nonconformists were rated for Church purposes; Nonconformists were excluded by tests from the universities; Nonconformists suffered endless slights under unjust Burial laws. Hitherto they had been curiously quiet under these injuries, but they were no longer a feeble folk, and the sense of power nerved them to protest. In 1834 the first great Church Rate Abolition agitation —an agitation that was to last for *thirty-four years*—

broke out. Several of the great industrial centres, such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, decided em phatically that there should be no rate for Church purposes. Let the richest Church in the world pay her own way, sustain her fabrics and support her ministry. That a Church in possession of all the tithe and endowment of the Establishment should desire to rate Nonconformists, who defrayed the expenses of their own worship and asked nothing of the State, was felt to be an intolerable iniquity. Yet in many towns and cities a majority of the vestry decided that a Church rate must be paid by all the inhabitants. As the principle of religious equality came to be better understood, the consciences of Free Churchmen rebelled against this demand. A great convention was held in London in 1834, presided over by that distinguished representative of Nonconformity in Parliament, Mr. Edward Baines, of Leeds. The Convention demanded that the Church of England should defray all costs connected with her own worship out of her own property. The agitation was vigorously maintained, and in 1836 a Church Rate Abolition Society was formed, and energetic propagandism carried forward. A narrow majority was secured for abolition in Parliament, but the Government was frightened and would not proceed. Meanwhile, in the country earnest and zealous Nonconformists had anticipated the inevitable change in the law by refusing to pay the rate. In all parts of the land some were found whose goods had to be sold to raise the sum demanded. By these forcible arguments the ascendency of the Church of England was demonstrated ; and if she failed to win the goodwill of the people, she nevertheless asserted her power very much as she had done in the days when she crowded the prisons with separatists. The property of Nonconformists was seized and sold that the clerygmen of the

parish might be paid or the church fabric restored. Where resistance to this gross injustice became obstinate, the offenders were flung into prison. William Baines of Leicester, John Thorogood of Chelmsford, John Childs of Bungay, and John Simonds of Aylesbury deserve honourable mention among those who suffered imprisonment rather than do what their consciences forbade. A celebrated case in connection with the growing agitation was the Braintree case. The Braintree churchwardens maintained that even if a majority of the vestry should be opposed to levying a rate the rate might be levied by the minority. The insolence of this demand was all that was needed to inflame the controversy. The question was carried to the Law Courts, where it was decided against the churchwardens. Still Parliament showed little disposition to move in the matter. Other, and even greater issues, were absorbing public attention. Nonconformity was, as we have seen, intensely concerned for the emancipation of the slaves. Free Churchmen had endured the obloquy of that unpopular cause, and were steadily carrying it forward to victory. The Oxford Movement was beginning; and the new ecclesiastical pretensions were directing some interest towards theological polemics. And although every new development only served to show the sacerdotal claims in a less favourable light, many of the old-fashioned Nonconformist divines held abstract convictions as to the liberation of religion from State patronage and control, but had not the courage to give them resolute and practical application.

In 1841, however, a new weapon was forged. In that year Edward Miall founded the *Nonconformist* newspaper; and provided himself thereby with a pulpit from which he preached to the Free Church community in all parts of the kingdom. Miall was a man with a firm grip

of principle, who saw that to give effect to it the programme of Nonconformity must be enlarged. The constitution itself must be reformed; the base broadened by the widening of the franchise. Then Nonconformity could receive more effective representation in Parliament, and its grievances would be less easily ignored. In the following year, one of the truly notable Nonconformists of the nineteenth century stood for Durham. He was rejected; but the year following he stood again and was triumphantly returned. This was John Bright, a young Rochdale Quaker. The spirit in which he entered the House of Commons is evident from an early speech which he delivered on the subject of the "Maynooth Grant." "When I look back to the history of this country, and consider its present condition, I must say that all that the people possess of liberty has come not through the portals of the cathedrals and parish churches, but from the conventicles which are despised by hon. gentlemen opposite. When I know that if a good measure is to be carried in this House it must be by men who are sent hither by the Nonconformists of Great Britain—when I read and see that the past and present State alliance with religion is hostile to religious liberty, preventing all growth and nearly destroying all vitality in religion itself—then I shall hold myself to have read, thought, and lived in vain if I vote for a measure which in the smallest degree shall give any further power or life to the principle of State endowment." This was strong meat for the House of Commons, but when Mr. Bright was elected member for Manchester in 1847, he spoke even more strongly: "I believe that hierarchies, State-manufactured clergies are in themselves evils, and that the time will come when they will be no more known on the face of the earth than some of those great creatures of which we have remnants left

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which lived before the flood." Clearly in such a Parliamentarian, gifted with so noble a strain of eloquence and such fearless fidelity to principle, Mr. Miall would have a colleague after his own heart. That their esteem was mutual from the first we gather from the fact that it was at Mr. Bright's suggestion that Mr. Miall was adopted as Liberal candidate for Rochdale and returned to Parliament in 1852. Previous to this latter election an Anti-State Church Association, which was known subsequently as the Liberation Society, had been formed in 1844, and in 1852 they were able to congratulate themselves that no fewer than forty Protestant Dissenters had been elected to the House of Commons. Mr. Miall's motto that the House of Commons was the key of the situation was now abundantly justified. It was no longer possible to trifle with the Church Rate agitation. Yearly motions on the question were made, and majorities in favour of abolition rose steadily, until in 1856 the usual resolution was approved by a majority of 74. Various compromises were now suggested, the favourite line being that persons declaring themselves Dissenters in writing should be exempted from the rate. The House of Lords, however, would have none of them ; and as the elections of 1859 were less favourable to Liberalism the agitation was again somewhat thrown back. It had to sustain itself, in fact, until 1868, when at Mr. Gladstone's instance the measure for abolishing compulsory Church Rates was carried. But the long delay did Nonconformity immeasurable good. As Mr. Bright plainly said, it taught them to distrust compromises and demand complete justice. They would not recognise as rightful the supremacy of the Established Church, and support it by rate-aid. This suffering of injustice together created a new sense of kinship among the Free Churches. Methodism re-

joiced to be associated in the crusade. Well might Lord John Russell say, as a singular tribute to the pertinacity of Nonconforming conviction, "I know the Dissenters. They carried the Reform Bill; they carried the abolition of slavery; they carried Free Trade; and they'll carry the abolition of Church Rates." His prophecy was justified when in 1868 the Established Church was compelled to abandon her cherished privilege of taxing poor Nonconformists to swell the revenues of the richest Church in the world.

A further victory had been won for religious equality after years of opposition by the House of Lords, when in 1866 the odious test, requiring candidates for public offices to declare their belief in the authenticity and truth of the Scriptures, and that they would not use their influence against the Established Church, was finally removed by law; and in the year following it was decreed that "all persons holding a judicial, civil, or corporate office" should be at liberty to attend their own places of worship in the robes or other insignia of their office.

"In the long run," said Lord Palmerston, "English politics will follow the consciences of the Dissenters." No period in English history more triumphantly vindicated this saying than the one we have just reached. Mr. Gladstone, rejected by Oxford University, was henceforth less prominently associated with clericalism, and his mind was steadily moving in the direction of complete religious equality. The question immediately confronting British statesmanship was the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland. Nonconformists were nothing if they were not Protestants; and it might be expected that their Puritan prejudices would disqualify them from doing justice to Roman Catholics. But they recognised that the establishment of a Protestant Church in a Catholic country was a standing injustice;

and despite all accusations of strengthening the position of the Catholics, they became the sturdy advocates of Disestablishment. Mr. Bright pointed out that 500,000 Episcopalians received from the State £600,000 a year; and he prophesied that the act of justice for which Nonconformity pleaded, so far from crippling, would immensely strengthen and vitalise the Irish Episcopal Church—a prophesy that has been amply fulfilled, as representative Irish Episcopalians have gladly confessed. Mr. Gladstone's great measure, however, created a perfect tempest of opposition. It was sacrilege; it was the legalisation of brigandage. That a portion of the endowments should be restored to unsectarian philanthropic and educational purposes excited the wrath of those who for generations had enjoyed their exclusive monopoly. It was in support of this Bill that Mr. Bright delivered one of the noblest vindications of the Nonconformist position ever heard in Parliament, concluding with the famous peroration, "I cannot doubt that in its early and late results this Bill will have the blessing of the Supreme; for I believe it to be founded on those principles of justice and mercy which are the glorious attributes of His eternal reign." Needless to add that in this case also politics followed the consciences of the Dissenters, and the Bill became law.

The next great national problem to emerge was Education; and it is idle to deny that to this question the Nonconformists had not yet learned to apply their principles resolutely and uncompromisingly. They had made and were making great sacrifices for the sake of their Voluntary schools, and education was not yet regarded by the majority of them in the light of a national duty. They had every reason to be proud of the part they had played in the history of education in Great Britain. The earliest systematic attempts to educate the poor

stand to the credit of a young Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, who was no more than nineteen years of age when he opened a school for poor children in his father's house in the Borough-road, Southwark. This was in the year 1797, and Lancaster's method, borrowed, it is supposed, from a Dr. Bell, who had practised it with success in Madras, was to make the elder and more instructed boys teach the younger—thus initiating the pupil-teacher system. Lancaster soon had ninety children in his school, and success came so rapidly that in less than two years a thousand children were under instruction in similar institutions. Needless to say, his Quaker principles guaranteed the absolutely unsectarian character of the teaching. A movement so notable was bound to attract attention, and King George III. interested himself personally in it, expressing the hope that all children in his dominions would soon be able to read the Bible. In the promotion of this end Lancaster travelled up and down the country, an apostle of education, and the foundation of the "British and Foreign School Society" was a consequence of his successful labours. It might have been supposed that a work so good in its results and so broad in its methods would commend itself to all. But from the first it excited the suspicion and antagonism of the clerics, whose belief it was that they themselves were alone capable of imparting instruction. Moreover they must have felt rebuked that, as the *Edinburgh Review* said, it required "the great exertions of the Dissenters to stir up the corresponding spirit in the Church." The feature of Lancaster's system which they especially resented was its freedom from sectarian bias. In the ironical phrase of the *Edinburgh Review*, "What more deadly attack upon religion than teaching children to read the Bible without prescribing also the gloss and commentary which Episcopacy has sanctioned!"

The most violent attacks were made on Lancaster and his system by the ecclesiastics and their supporters ; and Dr. Bell saw his opportunity to start a rival system of schools. The National School Society came into existence in 1811 to " check " the success of the " Goliath of Schismatics." The principles of the new society were that all children should be trained in the liturgy and Catechism of the Church of England, and compelled to attend the parish church on Sunday. From that day onwards the education struggle has been a battle of ideals. During the next half-century these two rival systems divided the public interest between them ; but it became increasingly certain that, despite very great generosity on the part of their supporters, large numbers of children would never be educated at all unless the State recognised it as a duty to provide for their compulsory education. In such a centre as Birmingham it was shown that forty per cent. of the children between three and twelve were entirely uneducated. Yet for national education most of the leading Nonconformists were unprepared. They were naturally suspicious of the capture of their schools by the Government, lest they should be used for State Church purposes. They had resisted such attempts before this. In 1843 Sir James Graham had proposed that schools should be established for teaching children employed in factories. To each school a chapel and a clergyman were to be attached, and the Litany and Catechism were to be taught at the State's expense. Nonconformists were entitled to claim exemption, but it was evident that the whole influence would be to increase the ascendency of the Episcopal Church. After a desperate agitation the measure was defeated ; but Nonconformists were more than ever disposed to resent State interference with the schools. The decade before 1870, however, witnessed significant

changes. The inevitable had to be faced, and the inevitable was universal compulsory education. The voluntary systems were proved inadequate. One of the earliest converts was Dr. Vaughan, a man of high historical and and theological attainments, who was convinced of the necessity of a national system. With him were associated some of the rising young Nonconformist ministers —most prominent of whom was Robert William Dale, the successor of John Angell James at Carr's-lane, Birmingham. Birmingham, indeed, was destined to become the headquarters of the great Educational movement. Three Nonconformists of commanding influence led its counsels—John Bright the Quaker, Dale the Congregationalist, and Joseph Chamberlain the Unitarian. Representatives of differing Free Churches, they were able to create a spirit in Birmingham such as found expression in the policy of the Birmingham Education League on behalf of compulsory elementary education supported by the State, and aided out of the local rates, popularly controlled and absolutely unsectarian in character. This policy, however, was far from uniting Nonconformists. Men of high position and deservedly great influence such as Edward Baines, of Leeds, and Samuel Morley, of Bristol, had been and still were ardent defenders of the Voluntary system ; and when Mr. Forster's Education Bill was laid before the House of Commons in 1870, representative Nonconformists were sharply divided on the subject. Unfortunately Mr. Bright was entirely disabled by illness from taking any part in the Parliamentary debates ; but Nonconformists were not without powerful representatives. Not only was Mr. Miall sleepless in his efforts to make the Bill more satisfactory, but Mr. Henry Winterbotham, whose early death deprived the Nonconformists of a wise political leader, and Mr. Henry Richard, whose labours

in the cause of international Peace and Arbitration have won for him a permanent place in history, were found in the front of the battle. Never had the allegiance of Nonconformists to the party of progress been subject to a severer strain. For Mr. Gladstone they entertained the highest regard; and Mr. Forster, by virtue of his Quaker ancestry, was one of themselves. Yet the vast majority of Free Churchmen felt that the proposals of the Government did violence to the rights of conscience. They knew that in many districts the conscience clause entitling a Nonconformist to withdraw his child from the religious instruction given in the Church schools would be inoperative on account of social tyranny. They knew, too, that if the principle of State aid to schools clerically managed were once admitted it would be capable of indefinite extension. In the issue they found themselves driven to accept a compromise by which a State system of education was established, although the Voluntary system was also to be subsidised out of the public exchequer. The bargain was that the Voluntary school was to receive not more than ten shillings in the pound from the State for the ten shillings which the subscribers were to find. In return for this State support, which was a further enormous endowment of the Established Church, the Church party consented to a system of national unsectarian education being set up. In their anxiety to secure the latter, the Nonconformists were compelled to acquiesce in the violation of a great principle —that public money should not be paid to institutions which refuse public control. It must not be supposed, however, that this grave breach of principle was condoned without a protest. So bitter was the controversy that it was many years before Mr. Gladstone regained the confidence of Nonconformists. Many of them broke

absolutely with his Government, and conducted an open and spirited agitation against his policy. Although it was often said afterwards that Nonconformists consented to the public endowment of privately-managed schools, the history of the time shows that they were not consenting parties; and that their most trusted representatives led an active and resolute revolt. The protest of these latter has been abundantly justified. The denominational schools have steadily increased their attack upon the public purse; so that thirty years later the State was providing eighteen shillings and sixpence in the pound, and yet little or nothing in the nature of control was demanded for this enormous subsidy. The protection afforded in the country districts to Nonconformist children and parents by the Conscience Clause has been entirely inadequate; and it scarcely admits of dispute that the interests of education have suffered severely from the State endowment of a sectarian system.

It is a singular fact that while the State was strengthening sectarianism in elementary education it was striking a memorable blow at it in the higher education of the country. During this very time when Nonconformists were fighting the Gladstone administration on behalf of national unsectarian education, a Bill became law for the abolition of all ecclesiastical tests in Oxford and Cambridge Universities. For one hundred and fifty years an agitation had been in progress which was at last crowned with success. As early as 1854 certain concessions had been wrung from Parliament. In that year and in 1856 some scholarships and degrees were thrown open to all citizens without reference to ecclesiastical opinions; but the Bill making all emoluments and offices independent of forms of religious belief passed in 1871, after a prolonged resistance on the part of Lord Salisbury. It was not till 1882 that the

headships of colleges in Oxford and Cambridge were made similarly open to all citizens. Of the many disabilities imposed on Nonconformists, this denial of the privileges of the higher education was perhaps the cruellest. It had suited the purpose of Churchmen first to exclude them from the high schools and universities, and then to reproach them with their lack of culture. Now, in 1871, the universities were made in fact what they had hitherto only been in name, national seats of learning. The Nonconformists were swift to avail themselves of their new privileges; and during the past thirty years quite an extraordinary proportion of the highest academic honours has fallen to Nonconformists, whose fathers were excluded by statute from the privileges which their children enjoy. It may be added that one of the most interesting consequences of this opening of the universities to Nonconformists was the establishment in October, 1886, of Mansfield College at Oxford, for the training of men for the Free Church ministry, and especially for the Congregational ministry. Since 1828 there had been a college at Birmingham known as Spring Hill College, founded by the two daughters of a Mr. Mansfield. Spring Hill College had been eminently useful, and among its tutors was the brilliant Henry Rogers, whose book, "The Eclipse of Faith," was one of the sensations of its day. Henry Rogers subsequently became president of Lancashire College, Manchester, and was at one time "earnestly pressed" by Lord Macaulay to become editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. Already the older Nonconformist seminaries and academies had developed into well-organised and ably-conducted colleges in various parts of the Kingdom. But the opportunity presented by the removal of tests at Oxford and Cambridge could not be long neglected. Spring Hill College was therefore sold, and its endowments trans-

ferred to Oxford, where Mansfield College was built and the building opened in 1889. Subsequently a Unitarian College was founded at Oxford, and a Presbyterian College at Cambridge.

It is unnecessary to detail the various Parliamentary struggles for a completer establishment in the old country of religious equality. By a Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Osborne Morgan, and eventually carried, supported as it was by the eloquence of Mr. Bright, it was permitted Nonconformists to bury their dead in the old parochial churchyards. It is a curious commentary on the lack of ordinary Christian charity among many State-Church clergymen, that such a concession had to be extorted from them by Act of Parliament, and was resisted strenuously, and only grudgingly acquiesced in when it could no longer be legally refused. Free Churchmen have felt it to be in the nature of an insult that in these respects the State has legislated for them as if they were a specially troublesome and even obnoxious class of the community ; instead of simply including them in all the common rights and privileges to which the citizens of a State are entitled. They have been compelled to realise that these invidious distinctions are due to the existence of a State-Church principle guaranteeing the ascendency of one particular branch of the Church of Christ over every other. This has given impetus to the movement for religious equality ; but so far no practical result has been accomplished. Resolutions in favour of the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, and of the Church of England in Wales, have been carried by substantial majorities in the House of Commons ; but measures to secure these ends have been hitherto resisted and frustrated in the House of Lords.

It would be an unpardonable omission if the life-

work of Henry Richard did not find its place in a history of the Free Churches. He began his career as a London Congregational minister, and was the son of a noted Calvinistic Methodist preacher in Wales. Henry Richard inherited his father's enthusiasm for the Principality, and first made his mark by strenuous and eager defence of the Welsh character and advocacy of popular education for his fellow-countrymen. In 1848 he became secretary of the Peace Society—"The Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace"—and in that capacity his best service to his age was rendered. His position brought him into close and cordial association with men like Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, and that noble humanitarian Joseph Sturge. But he did not confine his action and influence to this country. He was determined to establish relations of sympathy and co-operation among the friends of Peace in various lands; and the Conferences held in France, Germany, and elsewhere were exceedingly influential. In the year 1868 Mr. Richard was elected to represent Merthyr Tydvil in Parliament, and henceforth he was popularly known as "the Member for Wales." His Parliamentary efforts on behalf of Arbitration, National Education, Disestablishment, and other great causes very near to the hearts of Free Churchmen were unremitting, and his upright, disinterested character made him a great moral force in Parliament and in the country. It may be said with truth that his election to the House of Commons marked an epoch in Welsh Parliamentary history. His memory went back to the time when Wales had no Nonconformist representative. He lived to see twenty-eight Liberals elected out of thirty Members for Welsh constituencies, and very many of them sturdy and fervid Free Churchmen. He died in 1888, leaving behind him an un-

stained reputation and the enviable title "the Apostle of Peace."

Enough has been said to show the political power of Nonconformity. Starting from such small and obscure origins it had come to wield a quite extraordinary influence in the State. It had wrested for itself redress of grievances and recognition of rights; and more than once it had constrained the legislature to set on record a belief in the justice of the case for religious equality. But its services to civil and religious freedom were not greater than its services to theological freedom and progress. It was perhaps less quick to discover the immense advantage which enfranchisement from mediæval standards gave it in dealing with the modern mind; but from time to time men arose who claimed and exercised the right to think for themselves unfettered by ancient formulas. As Mr. Matthew Arnold pungently says, "office-holders under the Thirty-nine Articles . . . profess to see Christianity through the spectacles of a number of second or third rate men who lived in Queen Elizabeth's time, men whose works one never dreams of reading for the purpose of enlightening or edifying oneself." This, he asserts, is "an intolerable absurdity." Free Churchmen, for the most part, knew nothing of these shackles. Their whole history had been a splendid assertion, through every extremity of suffering, of the right to think, and to speak what is thought. Inevitably the restatement of doctrine and the necessary repudiation of some old ideas involved Free Churchmen in strenuous controversies among themselves. Equally inevitably the controversies could only have the result of strengthening their attachment to their principle of freedom. We have already referred to what was known as the "Rivulet" controversy. It was followed by an even sharper conflict in Lancashire

College, where Dr. Davidson's views on inspiration and the Bible brought him into antagonism with Dr. Vaughan, and a difficult situation was only relieved by the retirement of both the professors. For some years Congregationalism was the arena in which the battle for wider liberty of theological thought was fought out. In the autumn of 1877 the meetings of the Congregational Union were held at Leicester under the presidency of Mr. Henry Richard, M.P. Several prominent Congregational ministers, including J. Allanson Picton, of Hackney, and Mark Wilks, of Holloway, had taken the initiative in summoning a conference to affirm the principle "that religious communion is not dependent on agreement in theological, critical, or historical opinion." The course of the discussion made it clear that while Congregationalists stood by their historic objection to creeds they did not take this attitude because they had no great uniting faith, and that they were not in the least disposed to follow the older English Presbyterian Churches over to Unitarianism. The question once raised, however, could not be simply shelved, and in the following year, at Union Chapel, Islington, the session of the Congregational Union was made memorable by a great discussion in which all the leaders of the denomination took part. The resolution which was eventually carried was moved by Dr. Enoch Mellor, of Halifax, one of the most eloquent and influential ministers of the day. It imposed no creed upon the Assembly, but affirmed the loyalty of Congregationalists generally to "the Evangelical Faith revealed in the Holy Scriptures," and laid it down that this faith includes "the Incarnation, the Atoning Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Resurrection, Ascension, and Mediatorial Reign, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the renewal of men." These points stated were left to

the interpretation of individual minds. The debate cleared the air. It was conducted with ability and good feeling all round. The re-affirmation of a fundamental unity of faith gave great satisfaction to many Congregationalists, and could not give offence even to those who thought it most unnecessary. There was no abridgement of that right of private judgment for which Congregationalists, as Protestants, had always contended. But it was seen to be an impressive fact that where the widest liberty was cherished, there the deepest unity was realised. In this controversy Congregationalism alone was involved. The vindication of the same privilege of liberty of interpretation among the Baptist churches came later on, and only after painful and bitter strife. The central personality in this latter conflict was a minister of altogether extraordinary gifts, who exercised an influence it would be no exaggeration to call world-wide, and who used to speak of himself as "the last of the Calvinists"—Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Mr. Spurgeon was the son of a Congregational minister who outlived him many years. He was born in Kelvedon, Essex, and in 1853, when only a lad of nineteen, he came to London from the village of Waterbeach, in Cambridgeshire, where he had exercised a short pastorate. He had adopted Baptist views, and the chapel where he preached was in New Park-street, Southwark. His glowing eloquence, his wit and pathos, his vivid and sometimes lurid imagery, his intense conviction and moral passion won for him instantaneous and overwhelming success. He was startlingly unconventional in his methods of address, and had the genius of simplicity and directness, an incomparable gift of sinewy Saxon speech, and singular felicity in homely and racy illustration. Above all, those who heard him were conscious that he taught in the power of God, and

that the inspiration of the prophets was given to him. Nothing could be more uncompromising than his utterances. What Thomas Binney had said with such admirable force as to the honesty of subscribing creeds, Spurgeon said with tremendous vehemence, "I impeach before the bar of universal Christendom these men, who, knowing that baptism does not regenerate, yet declare in public that it does." This attack on the evangelical clergy of the Established Church was fiercely resented, but he held on his uncompromising way, withdrawing nothing and qualifying nothing. In 1861 the great Metropolitan Tabernacle was built. The cost was £32,000, and the edifice was constructed to hold five thousand people. Here, until his ministry ended, at his death in 1892, he preached to vast crowds of people, and built up a church unique in the history of the country consisting of over five thousand members. In addition to this church work he founded a college, called the Pastors' College, of which he was himself the president, and there hundreds of young men were trained for the Baptist ministry. He also founded the Stockwell Orphanage in 1867, a work which always had a large place in his great heart. His magazine, *The Sword and Trowel*, plentifully enriched with pithy paragraphs from his pen, attained a very considerable circulation, and his weekly sermons were distributed throughout the world, and read in almost all lands. Twenty-five thousand copies were disposed of every week, while of his "John Ploughman's Talk," which had the forcefulness, pungency, and wit of a Wyclif tract or a sermon by Latimer, no fewer than 400,000 copies were sold. Such was his influence and popularity that when he began to suggest publicly that some ministers with whom he was associated in the Baptist Union were heretical, an atmosphere of suspicion was created, and

when he took the extreme step of severing his connection with the Union a very painful controversy was precipitated. The Baptist Union, however, showed itself not unworthy of the heritage of liberty which had descended upon it; and even its unmeasured affection and reverence for its greatest preacher did not make it waver from its trust, nor prevail upon it to hedge the ministry with illiberal restrictions. It is only right to add that Mr. Spurgeon's later references to the Union were in the kindlier vein of earlier days.

A contemporary of Mr. Spurgeon's, and a leader of the Congregational Churches, was Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham. Dr. Dale spent all his ministerial life in connection with Carr's Lane Meeting House, where he succeeded John Angell James. If he never enjoyed the unique popularity as a preacher of Mr. Spurgeon, he was greatly his superior in mental power and theological culture. No Free Churchman exercised a wider influence on his generation. In Birmingham he was a leader of the educational, municipal and political, as well as of the religious life of the town. He was everywhere in request whenever the interests of Free Churchmen needed exposition. Among his fellow denominationalists he gained distinction by the high ideal of the Church which he did much to popularise. Believing that the veritable Presence of the Living Christ was guaranteed to the "two or three" who entered into fellowship in His Name, he traced the significance and authority of all Church rites and decisions to this illuminating and sanctifying Presence. It was, therefore, to him an intolerable profanity that a Church with such a charter should be subjected to the secular authority of Parliament, and its officers appointed by a Premier who might be a man of any religious opinions or of none. In his later years Dr. Dale threw himself more exclu-

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sively into theological and pastoral work; although he found time to serve Nonconformity and the State on a great Education Commission. His books, which were numerous, had a large circulation among men of every variety of ecclesiastical persuasion, and his most popular work on "The Atonement" was adopted as a class-book even in certain episcopal colleges.

Possibly it would not be unfair to say that an even greater influence on religious thought than preachers and theologians were able to exercise was exerted by Robert Browning. Bred in a Puritan home and associated from his earliest years with a Congregational church, there rings through his poetry the clarion note of faith. No "message" to the time more profoundly affected the modes of thinking of the more cultured Free Church ministers than Browning's. His triumphant belief in immortality; his conviction that Love is the soul of the universe; and his varied demonstrations of the reasonableness and sublimity of faith, were exactly the antidote to scepticism and materialism that a scientific age most needed. Out of Puritan England Browning spoke to the nineteenth century as Milton had spoken to the seventeenth. It seemed in the nature of things that he should choose as his wife the delicate and gifted Elizabeth Barrett, who came from another Congregational home and described herself in later days as a "Congregational Christian." The same note of passionate faith, the same splendid moral enthusiasm, are equally prominent in Mrs. Browning's poetry as in her husband's.

Lest it should be supposed that such contributions to the defence of the faith were the principal ones which the age was to owe to Free Churchmen, it will be necessary to speak of a new and marvellous movement which convincingly demonstrated that Evangelic passion was neither dead nor dying. The greatest argument for

Christianity is not, and can never be, intellectual. It is practical, in the actual redemption of the lowest and most degraded by the power of the Gospel. Missions to the poor had never been lacking, and often they had met with considerable success. But an organised attack upon the criminal classes can hardly be said to have been made until the Salvation Army was founded, with the one idea of appealing to those whose condition was considered desperate by the majority of respectable church-going folk. William Booth had been a preacher in the Methodist New Connexion. He had married a woman of whom it can be said without exaggeration that she was one of the noblest spiritual forces of her age. Together they worked out the scheme of the Salvation Army, and began to direct its operations in East London. Strange and repellent as many of its methods and much of its phraseology were, autocratic as its government was, it had to be judged by its results. The Army was only created in 1877, but it was soon seen that the highest spirit of soldierhood, complete devotion to the cause for which the fight was waged, was being abundantly displayed by the officers and the rank and file. While the spiritual work was always the most prominent, a striking development followed in 1890 just before Mrs. Booth died. The publication of the book called "Darkest England and the Way Out" pledged the Salvation Army to start various agencies for the social amelioration of the people. A sum of £100,000 was asked and subscribed for this bold experiment; and since that time a great work has been done along the lines indicated in the book. Too much praise would be impossible for the "rescue work" which has been pursued night and day by a large and devoted staff of wise and sympathetic workers, who deserve to rank among the saints of the nineteenth century. It can only be added here

that in addition to sending forth Salvation Army missionaries into almost every part of the United Kingdom, they have been sent out also to the great mission fields abroad, and some of their most striking successes have been achieved on the Continent of Europe and in the far East.

In our account of the various Free Churches we have had to trace their development each on its own distinctive lines and in independence of its neighbours in faith and polity. But it was certain from the first that churches that were substantially one in their beliefs, and in the privilege of freedom from State-support and State-control, would realise that they had a common work to do. The last movement among the Free Churches has been the greatest. We have already referred to such bodies as the Congregational Union and the Baptist Union. These Unions were the proof that the churches within them had come to realise that something more than the old independency was necessary for the solution of pressing modern problems. Sacerdotalism and Sacramentarianism entrenched themselves in great hierarchies. They had behind them vast organisations. As the Tractarian movement gradually changed the whole character of the Episcopal Church in England, reproducing the features which had disappeared before the Puritan reformers, and reviving theories which had flourished under conditions of mediæval ignorance, it became clearer every year that the future of Protestantism in England was in the hands of the Free Churches. But to justify so great a trust they must overcome many mutual jealousies and suspicions, and cultivate the spirit and practice of confederation. For this, as we have seen, some of the churches least acclimatised to the ideal of combination and co-operation, had been preparing. Although the Congregational and Baptist Unions were deliberative and not authoritative and executive bodies,

they had grown in influence, and had provided the machinery for more effective expression of the mind and will of these denominations. Local associations of Independent Churches helped forward the work of organisation. Isolation was now reprobated; and even independency was seen to have its disadvantages. Churches that were seeking after closer union among themselves were less averse to the idea of active co-operation with other churches whose government differed from their own but whose spirit and faith were similar. Hence the idea of a great Free Church Congress once mooted found many to welcome it. The first experiment in this direction was made in Manchester in 1892. It was so pronounced a success that a second Congress was a matter of course. In an incredibly short space of time local Free Church Councils sprang into existence in every part of England and Wales. The Romanising of the Anglican Church had provoked an agitation marked by much intensity and some violence. The publication of "The Secret History of the Oxford Movement" awaked and alarmed many who had been hitherto indifferent. The Free Churches came together under the shadow of a great common peril. Everywhere it was felt and recognised that the maintenance of the sturdy Protestant character of English life and worship rested mainly upon them. It seemed essential that whenever sacerdotal intolerance had to be resisted, the machinery should be in existence for making united and effective protest. The Councils took root; and representatives met annually in a great Congress, while a permanent National Council was organised, which, in addition to regular meetings, could be called together in emergencies. A singular proof of the substantial agreement subsisting among all sections of the Congress on matters of faith was seen in the preparation of a Free Church catechism.

It was recognised, however, from the first that the watchword of the Congress would be "Federation," and that no denomination was to sacrifice anything of its distinctive principles and life while acting in co-operation with others.

While the nineteenth century was ebbing out a proposal was made by Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., that Wesleyan Methodists should give a million guineas as a thank-offering to be used to strengthen the work of British Methodism for the Twentieth Century. The proposal was adopted with enthusiasm, and became a challenge to other Free Churches to do likewise. Congregationalism pledged itself to half-a-million, but allowed the money to be allocated by the subscribers to local objects. The Baptist denomination proposed a great central fund of a quarter of a million. Other Free Churches were not behind these in enterprise and generosity. Everywhere the response was indicative of the resolve to make the Christianity of the twentieth century simpler and purer, aggressive, unsacerdotal, and free. Scarcely had the twentieth century dawned when Free Churchmen found themselves involved in a desperate struggle against the attempt of the sacerdotalists to capture the schools of the nation for their own purposes. A Bill was introduced into Parliament in 1902 under which the School Board system of 1870 was to be destroyed, and the system of clerically-controlled schools was to be supported out of the rates. Nonconformists of every sort and kind offered strenuous and uncompromising opposition to a reactionary measure which proposed still further to sectarianise education and deprive Free Churchmen of any voice and vote in the management of the schools for which they were required to pay. The prospect of having to suffer loss and even imprisonment in the near future for their resistance to so inequitable

a measure, created a new sense of kinship, and produced in the Free Church Councils a consciousness of responsibility and power. There was no wavering, from the first, in their resolution to fight and endure to the bitter end rather than acquiesce in proposals which must prejudice religious freedom and educational efficiency in England.

This massing of the Free Church forces for the defence of the interests of religious liberty and Christian truth is the most influential factor in the present ecclesiastical situation in England. In our colonies the battle for religious equality has been won. From 1863 onwards the last vestiges of ecclesiastical privilege disappeared, and to all denominations was secured a fair field and no favour. America reinforces the experience of our colonies that a nation does not become less religious, but more so, when Cavour's ideal of "a free Church in a free State" is allowed to prevail. It is for the sake of a more Christian England that the Free Churches are uniting in the demand that this last injustice of one privileged sect, State-patronised and State-supported, shall cease, and Christianity be no longer associated with inequity. For the Free Church ideal not only includes equal rights for all citizens, but it includes the nobler establishment of the Church of Christ in the affection and reverence of the people, and restitution of the privileges of the Christian commonalty to govern and guide the affairs of the Christian Ecclesia. Toward the realisation of this ideal the nation is slowly but surely moving. The Free Churches which have been so largely instrumental in establishing the principle that the final authority in the State is the people, are now concerned to establish the principle that the final authority in the Christian Church is the Christian people. They have triumphed in the former issue; they will triumph in the latter.

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